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POETRY & TRUTH

FROM MY OWN LIFE

BY

J. W. VON GOETHE

A REVISED TRANSLATION BY

MINNA STEELE SMITH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY BY

KARL BREUL, M.A., LITT.D., PH.D.

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POETRY AND TRUTH

FROM MY OWN LIFE

PART THE THIRD

IT IS PROVIDED THAT TREES SHOULD NOT GROW INTO THE SKY

ELEVENTH BOOK

In telling my tale in the arbour at Sesenheim, I had interwoven the commonplace and the marvellous with the best skill I could muster, and when I drew to a close, I found that my hearers, who had followed me throughout with exceptional interest, were quite spell-bound by the novelty of my story. They urged me to write the tale, that they might often hear it again, by reading it among themselves, and to others. I promised this all the more readily, as I hoped it would form a pretext for repeating my visit, and give me an opportunity of forming a closer acquaintance. The party broke up for a while, and all were inclined to feel that, after a day spent so pleasantly, the evening might perhaps fall rather flat. I was freed from this anxiety by my friend, who asked permission for us both to take leave at once, because, as an industrious academical student, regular in his studies, he wished to pass the night at Drusenheim, and to be in Strasburg early in the morning.

We both rode to our quarters for the night in silence; I, because of the longing in my heart, which drew me back; he, because he had something else on his mind, which he confided to me as soon as we arrived. "It is strange," he began, "that you should hit just upon this tale. You must

have noticed that it made quite a remarkable impression?" "Of course," I answered, "how could I help observing that the elder sister laughed unreasonably at certain passages, that the younger one shook her head, that all of you looked significantly at each other, and that you yourself were nearly put out of countenance. I must confess I almost felt embarrassed myself, for it struck me that it was perhaps unwise to tell the dear creatures a parcel of idle tales they had better never have known, and to give them such a bad opinion of the male sex as they must naturally have formed from the character of the hero." "You are quite beside the mark," he said, "and, indeed, how should you know? These girls are not so unacquainted with such matters as you imagine, for the higher class of society around them gives them plenty of occasion for reflection; and there happens to be, on the other side of the Rhine, exactly such a married pair as you describe, allowing a little for fancy and exaggeration; the husband just as big, rough, and stolid,—the wife so pretty and dainty, that he could easily hold her in his hand. Their mutual position in other respects, their history altogether, so exactly fits in with your tale, that the girls seriously asked me whether you knew the persons in question and were describing them in jest. I assured them that you did not, and you will do well to leave the tale unwritten. By the help of delays and pretexts, we shall soon be able to let the matter drop."

I was much astonished, for I had had no such couple in my mind either on this or the other side of the Rhine; nor could I have explained how I came by the idea. I liked to amuse myself by such imaginary adventures, and was convinced it would be the same with others, when they heard me tell them.

When I returned to my occupations in the city, I felt them more than usually burdensome, for a man active by nature forms plans beyond the reach of his capacity, and overburdens himself with work. This may go on for a while, till some physical or moral impediment intervenes to show him clearly the disproportion of his powers to the task he has undertaken.

I pursued jurisprudence with enough diligence to take my degree with some credit. Medicine charmed me, because

it gave me glimpses of nature on every side, even if it could not interpret it; and I was further attached to it by circumstances and habit. To society I was obliged to devote some time and attention; for in many families I had formed ties of intimacy and affection. I might still have continued to endure such a life, had not the burden laid on me by Herder weighed relentlessly upon my mind. He had torn down the curtain which concealed from me the poverty of German literature; he had cruelly destroyed many of my prejudices; there were but few stars of importance left in the sky of our fatherland, when he had ruthlessly dismissed the rest as so many transient meteors; nay, he had so blighted my own hopes and fancies respecting myself, that I began to doubt my own powers. Yet at the same time, he dragged me after him on the broad and noble road which he himself loved to tread, drew my attention to his favourite authors, with Swift and Hamann at their head, shaking me to my feet even more forcibly than he had cast me down. To all this mental confusion was now added an incipient passion, which, while it threatened to absorb me, might distract me from my condition, but could hardly help me to rise above it. Added to this was a physical discomfort, which made me feel after dinner as if my throat were closing up. I easily got rid of this trouble later by giving up a kind of red wine which we liked and usually drank in the boarding-house. I had been free of this intolerable inconvenience at Sesenheim, so that I had double cause for being happy there, but when I came back to my town-diet I felt it again, to my great annoyance. All this made me thoughtful and morose; and my outward manner probably corresponded to my inner feelings.

In a worse humour than usual, because my indisposition was more violent after dinner, I attended the clinical lecture. The cheerful ease of manner with which our honoured instructor led us from bed to bed, his minute observation of significant symptoms, his diagnosis of the general course of the complaint, his fine Hippocratic method, by which, without theory, and from individual experience alone, he deduced scientific facts, the skill of his concluding address—all this attracted me to him, and made this foreign branch of science, of which I only caught a glimpse through

a crevice, all the more charming and fascinating to me. My disgust at the patients gradually decreased, as I learned to forget their physical condition in the ideas suggested by it, which rendered possible the recovery and restoration of human form and human life. He probably was particularly interested in me, and in my singularities, and pardoned the strange anomaly which brought me to his lectures. On this occasion he did not conclude his lecture, as usual, with a lesson applicable to some special disease we had been observing, but said cheerfully, "Gentlemen, the holidays are before us; make use of them to brighten your spirits. Studies should not only be pursued earnestly and diligently but also with cheerfulness and ease of mind. Give your bodies exercise, and enjoy the beauties of the country on horse-back and on foot. The native-born will enjoy what is familiar to him, and the foreigner will find new impressions, and pleasant reminiscences for the future."

There were only two of us to whom this admonition could be directed. May the recipe have been as obvious to the other as it was to me! I thought I heard a voice from heaven, and made all the haste I could to order a horse and attire myself suitably. I sent for Weyland, but he was not to be found. This did not thwart my resolution, but my preparations unfortunately took a long time, and I could not get off as early as I had hoped. Fast as I rode, night overtook me. The way was not to be mistaken, and the moon shone on the lover's path. The night was windy and eerie, and I dashed on, that I might not have to wait till morning before I could see her.

It was already late when I put up my horse at Sesenheim. The landlord, in answer to my question, whether there was still a light in the parsonage, assured me that the ladies had only just gone home; he thought he had heard they were still expecting a visitor. This did not please me, as I would have liked to be the only one. I hastened on, late as it was, so that at least I might be the first to arrive. I found the two sisters sitting at the door. They did not seem much astonished, but I was, when Frederica whispered in Olivia's ear, loud enough for me to hear, "Did I not say so? Here he is!" They took me to a room, where they had prepared some slight refreshment. Their mother greeted

me as an old acquaintance; and the elder sister, when she saw me in the light, burst into loud laughter, for she had little self-control.

After this somewhat strange reception, we began at once to talk freely and merrily, and though the mystery remained unexplained that evening, it was revealed to me next day. Frederica, it seems, had predicted that I should come; and who does not feel some satisfaction at the fulfilment of a foreboding, even when it is a mournful one? All presentiments, when confirmed by the event, give man a higher opinion of himself, whether because he likes to think himself possessed of such fine susceptibilities as to feel a premonition at a distance, or of such penetration as to be able to draw necessary but still uncertain conclusions. Even Olivia's laugh remained no secret; she confessed that it had amused her to see me this time so carefully and punctiliously decked out. Frederica, on the other hand, preferred not to put it down to personal vanity, but rather to a wish to please her.

Early in the morning Frederica asked me to take a walk with her. Her mother and sister were busy preparing to receive several guests. And so by the side of the girl I loved, I enjoyed the glories of a Sunday morning in the country, just as Hebel has depicted them in his incomparable verse. She described the expected visitors for me, and asked me to help her to devise such entertainment as might best be enjoyed in common, and, if possible, with some method. "Generally," she said, "everyone tries to amuse himself. Fun and games are so soon exhausted that at last nothing is left but cards for some, and dancing for others."

So we sketched a plan of what we should do before and after dinner, taught each other some new round games, and finally, in this happy agreement, obeyed the summons of the bell calling us to church, where, by her side, I found the somewhat dry sermon her father gave us, none too long.

The presence of the beloved one always shortens time; but this hour passed in deep reflection. I rehearsed to myself the good qualities which she had just unfolded so freely in my presence—her thoughtful cheerfulness, her simplicity combined with self-respect, her prudent merriment—qualities which seemed incompatible, but which

nevertheless were united in her, and gave an added charm to her appearance. But next I had far more serious reflections to make upon myself, such indeed as were hardly conducive to unshadowed cheerfulness.

Since that impassioned girl had cursed and sanctified my lips (for every consecration involves both), I had, superstitiously enough, taken care not to kiss any girl, because I feared that I might injure her in some unknown, mysterious way. I had therefore held in check every desire which impels a youth to win from a charming girl a favour of this kind, which means so much or so little. But even in the most decorous company I was often put to a severe test. Those more or less ingenious little games, as they are called, which often serve to keep together and amuse a merry circle of young friends, depend in a great measure upon forfeits, and in the calling in of these kisses play a considerable part. Now I had resolved, once for all, not to kiss, and as any deficiency or obstacle stimulates us to an activity which we should not otherwise have displayed, I exerted all the wit and talent I possessed to get out of the difficulty, to the gain rather than loss of the amusement of the company, and of my credit in their eyes. When a verse was wanted for the redemption of a forfeit, I was generally the one called upon. Now I was always prepared, and on such occasions contrived to produce something in praise of the hostess, or of some lady who had shown herself particularly gracious to me. If it happened that a kiss was imposed upon me in any case, I endeavoured to escape by some subterfuge which usually proved equally agreeable; and as I had time to think it out beforehand, I was never in want of various graceful excuses, although those made on the spur of the moment were always most successful.

When we reached home, the guests, who had arrived from various quarters, were buzzing about merrily here and there, until Frederica got them together, and invited them to follow her to her favourite nook. There they found copious refreshments, and suggested filling up the interval till dinner by playing some round games. Here, by agreement with Frederica, though she did not know my secret, I contrived to get up several games and carry them out without

forfeits, or else contrived that the paying of forfeits should be without kissing.

My skill in evading them was all the more necessary, because the company, though consisting of perfect strangers to me, seemed to have suspected some connection between me and Frederica, and maliciously did their best to force upon me that which I was secretly endeavouring to avoid. For in such circles, as soon as the onlookers perceive a growing liking between two young people, they try hard to embarrass them or else to bring them together, just as afterwards, when once a passion has been declared, they will take the greatest pains to separate them again. For the society man is totally indifferent as to whether he confers a benefit or an injury, provided only he is kept amused.

This morning I had the opportunity of thoroughly studying Frederica's character in all its bearings, so that all the rest of the time I knew her she never seemed to me to change. The friendly greetings which the country-people gave her in particular showed me that she was generous to them, and had won their good-will. At home the elder sister was her mother's right hand, for nothing that demanded physical exertion was required of Frederica ; she was spared, they said, on account of her chest.

There are women whom we like best to see in a room, others who look better in the open air. Frederica belonged to the latter. Her whole personality, her figure never appeared to better advantage than as she walked along a raised footpath ; the grace of her carriage seemed to vie with the flowery earth, and the steady brightness of her face with the blue sky. And she carried this refreshing atmosphere which surrounded her back into the house with her. It was easy to see how clever she was in clearing away difficulties, and with what ease she could smooth away the painful impression left by any small unpleasantness.

The purest joy which we can feel with respect to one we love is to find that she pleases others. Frederica shed a happy influence around her wherever she went. In walks, she flitted about, an animating spirit, and knew how to fill up any occasional gaps which might occur. We have already mentioned the lightness of her movements, and she was most graceful when she ran. Just as the deer seems to be

best fulfilling its destiny as it bounds lightly over the sprouting corn, so the peculiar essence of her nature seemed best to reveal itself as she ran with light steps over mead and furrow, to fetch something forgotten, to look for something lost, to summon a distant couple, or to give any necessary orders. At such times she was never out of breath, and never lost her balance. Hence her parents' great anxiety about her chest must to many have seemed excessive.

The father, who often accompanied us through fields and meadows, could not always find a suitable companion. So I would often join him, when he never failed to recur to his favourite theme, and to tell me in detail about the plans for the new manse. He particularly regretted that he could not get back the carefully finished sketches to consider them and ponder this or that improvement. I observed that the loss might be easily remedied, and offered to prepare a ground-plan, which was, after all, the main thing. He was highly delighted, and settled that we should have the assistance of the schoolmaster, and hurried off at once to stir him up, so that the foot-rule might be in readiness early on the morrow.

When he had gone, Frederica said, "It is good of you to humour my dear father on his weak point, and not, like others, who get weary of the subject, avoid him, or break it off. I must, indeed, confess to you that the rest of us do not want this building; it would be too expensive for the congregation, and for us too. A new house, new furniture! Our guests would not feel any more comfortable with us, now they are once accustomed to the old building. Here we can give them liberal hospitality; there we should find ourselves straightened in more pretentious surroundings. That is how the matter stands; but do not stop being kind to him. I thank you for it, from my heart."

Another lady who joined us asked about some novels,—whether Frederica had read them. She answered in the negative, for she read very little on the whole. She had been brought up to a happy, wholesome enjoyment of life, and was educated in accordance with it. I had the *Vicar of Wakefield* on the tip of my tongue, but did not venture to suggest it, the similarity of the situations being too striking

and too pertinent. "I am very fond of reading novels," she said; "one finds such nice people in them, whom one would like to resemble."

The measurement of the house took place the following day. It was rather a slow proceeding, as I was as little accustomed to such labours as the schoolmaster was. At last I succeeded in making a passable sketch. The good vicar told me his views, and was not displeased when I asked permission to prepare the plan more at my leisure in town. Frederica took leave of me happily; she was convinced of my affection, and I of hers; and the six leagues now seemed a trifling distance. It was so easy to reach Drusenheim by diligence, and by this vehicle, as well as by ordinary and extraordinary messengers, to keep up a connection, in which George was to be the bearer of despatches.

No sooner had I arrived in town than I occupied myself in the early hours (for I had no wish for much sleep) with the plan, which I drew out as carefully as I could. In the meanwhile I had sent Frederica some books, accompanied by a few words of affection. I received an answer at once, and was charmed with her fine, pretty, expressive handwriting. Contents and style were natural, good, affectionate, and heartfelt; and thus the pleasing impression she had made upon me was continually kept up and renewed. I delighted in recalling the endowments of her lovely person, and cherished the hope that I should see her soon again, and for a longer time.

I now no longer needed any advice from our kindly professor. He had so completely cured me by his timely words that I had no particular inclination to see him and his patients again. My correspondence with Frederica became more frequent. She invited me to some festivities, to which some friends from over the Rhine were coming too. I was to make arrangements for a longer stay. So I packed a bulky portmanteau on the diligence, and in a few hours I was in her presence. I found a large merry party assembled, took the father aside, and handed him the plan, to his great delight. I talked over with him what had occurred to me as I was working at it. He was beside himself with joy, and especially praised the neatness of the

drawing. This I had practised from my youth upwards, and had on this occasion taken especial pains, and used the finest paper. But this pleasure was very soon marred for our good host, when, against my advice, and in the joy of his heart, he laid the sketch before the company. Far from showing the interest expected, some took no heed at all of this precious work; others, who thought they knew something about it, made matters worse by blaming the sketch as inartistic, and, while the old gentleman looked away for a moment, some handled the clean sheets as if they were so many rough sketches, and one marked his suggested improvements on the thin paper with such hard pencil-strokes that it destroyed any possibility of restoring the drawing to its original neatness.

I had difficulty in soothing the old man's extreme irritation at this ruthless destruction of his pleasure, much as I assured him that I myself looked on them only as sketches, which we would talk over, and on which we would construct new drawings. In spite of this, he went off in a very ill humour, and Frederica thanked me for my attention to her father, as well as for my patience during the unmannerly conduct of the other guests.

But in her presence I could feel neither pain nor ill-humour. The party consisted of tolerably noisy young people, though one old gentleman seemed to wish to outshine them by proposing even wilder pranks than theirs. Even at breakfast the wine had not been stinted. At a well-furnished dinner-table there was no lack of good things, which everyone relished the more after their active bodily exercise in the warm weather, and if the bailiff indulged rather too freely, the young people did not lag behind him.

I was happy beyond all measure by Frederica's side—talkative, merry, witty, boisterous, yet kept within bounds by my feelings of reverence and affection. She, in a similar position, was open, cheerful, sympathetic, and communicative. We both seemed to live for the company, yet really lived only for each other.

After the meal the guests sought the shade, round games were begun, and it came to forfeits. In redeeming the forfeits they carried every jest to excess; the gestures

commanded, the actions to be done, the problems to be solved, all showed a mad merriment which knew no bounds. I myself contributed to these wild jokes by many an absurd prank, and Frederica shone in them by many a droll inspiration; to me she seemed more charming than ever, all hypochondriacal superstitious fancies had vanished, and when the opportunity offered of heartily kissing one whom I so tenderly loved, I did not let it slip, still less did I deny myself a repetition of the pleasure.

The party now expressed a desire for music: it was gratified at once, and all hastened to the dance. Rustic dances, with much waltzing and figuring, formed the beginning, middle, and end of the entertainment. Everyone joined in this national dance; even I did sufficient credit to my private dancing mistresses, and Frederica, who danced as beautifully as she walked, jumped, and ran, was delighted to find so expert a partner in me. We generally kept together, but were soon obliged to leave off, as she was advised on all sides not to go on exerting herself so violently. We consoled ourselves by a solitary walk, hand in hand, and when we reached our quiet nook, by a warm embrace and the most sincere assurance that we loved each other with our whole hearts.

Older persons, who had risen from their cards, now joined us. Nor was there any return to sober sense at supper-time. Dancing went on till far into the night, and the pledging of healths and other incitements to drinking went on as gaily as at midday.

I had scarcely had a few hours' sound sleep, when I was awakened by the heat and fever of my blood. It is at such times and in such situations that care and repentance usually attack a man as he lies defenceless. My imagination began at once to draw the wildest pictures; I saw Lucinda, after her impassioned kiss, drawing fiercely away from me, and, with glowing cheek and sparkling eyes, uttering that curse, by which she intended to menace her sister alone, but by which she also unconsciously threatened innocent persons, totally unknown to her. I saw Frederica standing opposite to her, paralysed at the sight, and pale already from the consequences of the curse, of which she knew nothing. I found myself between them, as little able

to ward off the mental effects of the incident as to avoid the evil-boding kiss. Frederica's delicate health seemed to hasten the threatened calamity, and now her love for me began to wear a most unhappy aspect, in my eyes, and I wished that lands and seas lay between us.

But I will not conceal something still more painful to me, which lay in the back of my mind. It was a kind of self-conceit which kept that superstition alive in me;—my lips, whether consecrated or accursed, assumed a new importance in my eyes, and I felt no little complacency in the consciousness of my self-denying conduct, in renouncing many an innocent pleasure, partly to preserve my magic privilege, partly to avoid injuring a harmless being by giving it up.

But now all was lost and irrevocable: I had returned to a mere commonplace position, and I thought that I had harmed, perhaps irretrievably, the being dearest to my heart. Thus, far from my being freed from the curse, it was flung back from my lips into my own heart.

This tumult raged in my veins, fevered already by love and passion, wine and dancing, confused my thoughts and tortured my feelings, so that, especially in contrast with the joys of the preceding day, I felt in a state of limitless despair. Fortunately daylight peered in upon me through a chink in the shutter, and the sun rising and vanquishing all the powers of night, set me again upon my feet; I was soon in the open air, and refreshed, if not restored.

Superstition, like many other fancies, easily loses its power, when, instead of flattering our vanity, it stands in its way, and makes this delicate creature pass through an evil hour. We then see clearly enough that we can get rid of it at will; and renounce it the more easily, as every attempt we make to weaken it redounds to our own advantage. The sight of Frederica, the feeling of her love, the cheerfulness of everything around me—all reproved me for being able in the midst of such days to harbour such dismal night-birds in my bosom. The sweet girl's conduct, which daily grew more intimate and confiding, filled me with joy, and my happiness was crowned when, this time at parting, she openly kissed me, as well as her other friends and relatives.

In the city many occupations and dissipations awaited

me, from the midst of which I frequently called myself to thoughts of my beloved, by means of a correspondence, which we regularly established. Even in her letters she was always the same; whether she told anything new, or alluded to well-known occurrences, lightly described or cursorily mentioned, it was always as if, even with her pen, she were going and coming, running and bounding with a step as light as it was sure. I too loved to write to her, for the act of calling up her virtues to my mind increased my affection even in absence, so that this intercourse was little inferior to a personal one, and, indeed, in time I came to think it pleasanter and dearer.

As to that superstition, it had been altogether destroyed. It was indeed based upon impressions of earlier years, but the spirit of the times, the buoyancy of youth, and intercourse with cold, practical men, all had worked against it, so that it would not have been easy to find among all my acquaintance a single person to whom a confession of my fancies would not have seemed perfectly ridiculous. But the worst of it was, that the fancy, while it fled, left behind it serious reflections on the state of those whose early affections can hope for no lasting result. So that far from getting free from error, understanding and reflection only left me in a deeper plight. My passion increased the more I learned of the virtues of her excellent character, and yet the time was drawing near when I was to lose, perhaps for ever, so much that was good and dear to me.

We had spent some time together, happily and peacefully, when that rogue Weyland had the audacity to bring with him to Sesenheim a copy of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and when they were talking of reading aloud, to hand it over to me unexpectedly, and quite as a matter of course. I managed to collect myself, and read as brightly and with as little embarrassment as I could. The faces of my hearers soon grew interested, and they seemed nothing loath to be again called upon to institute a comparison. If they had found amusing counterparts to Raymond and Melusina, they here saw themselves in a glass where their image was by no means unpleasingly reflected. They did not openly confess, yet did not deny, that they were moving in a world akin to them in thought and feeling.

All right-minded men feel, as their education progresses, that they have a double part to play in the world,—an actual, and an ideal one, and this feeling is the mainspring of all noble endeavour. The actual part which has been assigned to us is but too plainly revealed to us ; but as regards the second, we seldom come to a clear understanding. Man may seek his higher destiny on earth or in heaven, in the present or in the future, yet this very aspiration will always expose him to the attacks of doubts from within and disturbing influences from without, until he is at length driven to declare that only that is right which is conformable to his nature.

One of the most harmless of these efforts to acquire something higher, to rise to better things, is the youthful instinct of comparing oneself with characters in novels. It is quite innocent, and whatever may be urged against it, the reverse of mischievous. It amuses us at times when we should otherwise die of *ennui*, or grasp at sensual pleasures.

We are continually hearing of the baneful influence of novels—and yet what harm if a pretty girl or a handsome youth put themselves in the place of someone who fares better or worse than themselves? Is our commonplace existence worth so much? or do the daily necessities of life absorb us so completely that we must thrust aside every nobler aspiration?

The tendency which has crept into the German church, often to the annoyance of the officiating clergyman, to use historical or legendary names at christenings instead of the old biblical ones, can no doubt be regarded as an off-shoot of this love for romantic and poetic fiction. This very impulse to ennoble one's child by a well-sounding name—even if the name had nothing further behind it—is praiseworthy, and this connection of an imaginary world with the actual one sheds a pleasant glow over the whole of his after-life. We have some satisfaction in calling a beautiful child "Bertha," but if we were to call her "Urselblandine," should feel we were insulting her. Any cultured man, and how much more a lover, would certainly feel such a name falter on his lips. The cold, narrow-minded world is not to be blamed if it sets down all flights of the imagination as ridiculous and objectionable, but the thoughtful student of

mankind must know how to estimate them according to their worth.

Now the comparison forced on them by a roguish friend produced the most favourable consequences for our young lovers on the fair banks of the Rhine. We do not think of ourselves when we look in a mirror, but we feel ourselves, and take ourselves for granted. And it is the same with those mirrors of the soul, in which we recognize our manners and inclinations, our habits and peculiarities, as in a shadow-picture which we would fain grasp and hold in a brotherly embrace.

We grew more and more accustomed to being always together, till it was an accepted fact that I belonged to their circle. The affair was allowed to take its course and no one asked what the result would be. For how many parents are compelled to let their sons and daughters continue for a while in some such unsettled state, until chance determines it for life far better than any pre-concerted plan could possibly have done.

Everyone thought that perfect reliance could be placed both on Frederica's sentiments and on my rectitude, of which they had formed a favourable opinion on account of my strange forbearance from even innocent caresses. We were left unobserved, as was generally the custom in those days, in that part of the country; we might please ourselves about visiting friends in the neighbourhood, and about the amount of companionship we cared to cultivate. Scattered on both sides of the Rhine, in Hagenau, Fort Louis, Philippsburg, the Ortenau, I found the homes of those whom I had seen gathered under one roof at Sesenheim, each friendly, hospitable host throwing open kitchen and cellar, and making me free of gardens and vineyards, and, indeed, of the whole neighbourhood. The islands on the Rhine were often the goal of our water-parties. There we mercilessly threw the cool inhabitants of the limpid Rhine into the kettle, put them on the spit, or into boiling fat, and would, perhaps, have taken up our quarters almost too freely in the snug fishermen's huts, if the abominable Rhine-gnats had not driven us away after an hour or two. I remember one occasion, when just such an intolerable interruption had broken up one of our most charming

pleasure parties, where everything else had prospered, and the affection of the lovers had seemed to increase with the pleasure of the expedition. When we arrived at home too soon, uselessly and inopportunely, I actually broke out, in the presence of the good vicar himself, into blasphemous expressions, and assured him that these gnats alone were sufficient to cure me of the conviction that a good and wise Deity had created the world. The religious-minded old man, by way of reply, solemnly called me to order, and explained to me that these gnats and other vermin had not arisen until after the fall of our first parents, or if there were any of them in Paradise, they could only have hummed pleasantly, and certainly never stung. I was calmed at once, for an angry man is easily appeased if we can once make him smile; but I nevertheless asserted that there was no need of the angel with the burning sword to drive the guilty pair out of the garden; my host, I said, must rather allow me to think that this was effected by means of swarms of gnats on the Tigris and the Euphrates. And so I made him laugh in my turn; for the old man understood a joke, or at any rate would always let one pass.

However, the delights of the days and seasons in this lovely country were calculated to inspire more serious and elevated feelings. One had only to give oneself up to the present, to enjoy the clear radiance of the sky, the rich splendour of the earth, the mild evenings, the warm nights, by the side of a beloved one, or in her vicinity. For months together we were favoured with pure ethereal mornings, when the sky shone on us in all its magnificence, drenching the earth with heavy dews; and that this sight might not become monotonous, clouds after clouds would mass themselves now here, now there, over the distant mountains. They would stand there for days, nay, for weeks, without darkening the bright skies, and even the passing storms refreshed the country, and gave fresh lustre to the green of trees and grass, glistening as they dried again in the sunshine. The double rainbow, two-coloured borders of a strip of dark grey or almost black sky, were finer, brighter, more highly coloured, more decided, but also more transient, than any I have ever seen.

Among such surroundings a poetic inspiration, which I

had not felt for a long time, returned to me. I composed for Frederica many songs to well-known melodies. They would have made a charming little volume; a few of them still remain, and can easily be traced among my other poems.

As my unusual studies and other circumstances often compelled me to return to town, our affection found new ways of manifesting itself, and so saved us from all that unpleasantness which is usually an annoying consequence of such little love-affairs. Though far from me, she yet worked for me, and devised new amusements against my return; though far from her, I laboured for her, that by some new gift or new idea I might be able to appear before her in some new aspect. Painted ribbons had then just come into fashion; I at once painted one or two pieces for her, and sent them on with a little poem, as on this occasion I was forced to stop away longer than I had anticipated. In order to fulfil and even go beyond my promise to her father of bringing him a new and complete plan, I persuaded a young adept in architecture to work at it instead of me. The pleasure he took in the task was in proportion to his affection for me, and he found further incitement in the hope of winning a favourable reception in so delightful a family. He finished ground-plan, elevation, and section of the house; court-yard and garden were not forgotten, and a detailed but very moderate estimate was added, so as to make the execution of an extensive and costly project seem easy and feasible.

These proofs of our friendly endeavours gained us the kindest reception; and the good father, seeing we had the desire to serve him, expressed one wish more; it was the wish to see his pretty but self-coloured chaise adorned with flowers and other ornaments. We showed ourselves anxious to please him. Colours, brushes, and other requisites were brought from the tradesmen and apothecaries of the neighbouring towns. But that a true "Wakefieldian" mistake might not be wanting, it was not until everything had been most industriously and brightly painted over, that we observed that we had used a wrong varnish which would not dry; neither sunshine nor drought, neither fair nor wet weather were of any avail. In the meanwhile we were obliged to make use of an old tumble-down coach, and

nothing was left us but to scrape off the decorations with more labour than we had painted them. Our dislike of the work was further increased when the girls entreated us, for heaven's sake, to work slowly and cautiously, in the hope of sparing the groundwork ; this, however, after our operations, could never again be restored to its former brilliancy.

These disagreeable little incidents, which happened at intervals, troubled us, however, just as little in our cheerful life as they would have done Dr. Primrose and his amiable family ; for many an unexpected pleasure befell both ourselves and our friends and neighbours. Weddings and christenings, the erection of a building, an inheritance, a prize in the lottery, all such events were announced from family to family and enjoyed in common. We shared all joys together, like a common property, and enhanced them by our mutual affection. It was not the first nor the last time that I found myself in families and social circles at the very moment of their highest prosperity, and if I may flatter myself that I contributed something towards the brightness of such seasons, I am, on the other hand, open to the reproach that it was equally due to me, if such times passed the more quickly and vanished the sooner.

But now our love was to undergo a singular trial. I call it a trial, although this is not the right word. The country family with which I was intimate was related to other families in the city, families of good note and standing, and in comfortable circumstances. The young town relatives were often at Sesenheim. The older persons, the mothers and aunts, who were not so active, heard so much of the life there, of the increasing charms of the daughters, and even of my influence, that they first wished to become acquainted with me, and after I had visited them several times and had been well received by them, expressed a further desire to see us once altogether, especially as they thought they owed the Sesenheim family some friendly hospitality in return for theirs.

There was much discussion *pro* and *con*. The mother found it difficult to leave her household, Olivia had a horror of the town, which did not suit her, and Frederica had no inclination for it ; so the matter was put off, until it was at

last decided by the fact, that it happened to be impossible for me to come into the country within a fortnight ; for it was better to see one another in the city, and under some restraint, than not to see one another at all. So I now found the two sisters, whom I had been accustomed to see only in rural surroundings, and whose image had hitherto appeared to me only on a background of waving boughs, flowing brooks, flowery meadows, and a wide-stretching, open horizon ; I now saw them, I say, for the first time, in town-rooms, which were indeed spacious, but yet confined, if we take into consideration the carpets, mirrors, tall clocks, and porcelain figures.

The nature of our relationship to what we love is so firmly fixed, that it is little influenced by its surroundings, but nevertheless the heart demands that these should be the suitable, natural, and wonted ones. My lively susceptibility to present impressions, made it at first difficult for me to adapt myself to the conflicting elements of the moment. The mother's dignified, calm and refined manner was perfectly adapted to this new setting ; she was in no way different from the other ladies ; Olivia, on the other hand, showed herself as impatient as a fish out of water. As she had formerly called to me in the garden, or beckoned me aside in the fields, if she had anything particular to say to me, she did the same here, by drawing me into the recess of a window. She did it awkwardly and with embarrassment, because she felt that it was not the right thing, and did it notwithstanding. She had the most unimportant things in the world to say to me—nothing but what I knew already ; for instance, that she was wretched, that she wished she were by the Rhine, across the Rhine, or even in Turkey. Frederica, on the contrary, was surprising in this new position. Properly speaking, she was not suited to it either, but it was characteristic of her, that, instead of adapting herself to these conditions, she unconsciously moulded the conditions in accordance with herself. She acted here as she had acted with the company in the country. She knew how to enliven every moment. Without making any disturbance, she set everything going, and thereby, indeed, promoted the general peace, since it is boredom which really causes disturbance. This was exactly in accordance with the desire of her town aunts, who wished for once to watch

these rural games and amusements from their sofas. When they had tired of these, then the dress, trinkets, and other French fashions of the town nieces were duly studied and admired without envy. With me, too, Frederica had no difficulty, since she treated me as she always had done. She seemed to show me no other signs of favour than that of communicating her desires and wishes to me rather than to another, and thus recognizing me as her servant.

To this willing service she confidently laid claim on one of the following days, by telling me in private that the ladies were anxious to hear me read. They had heard much about it from the daughters of the house, for at Sesenheim I had read aloud whatever and whenever they wished. I was ready at once, but asked for quiet and attention for several hours. This was promised me, and one evening I read through the whole of *Hamlet* without interruption, interpreting the piece as well as I was able, and rendering it with that spirit and passion which is possible in youth. I earned great applause. Frederica drew deep breaths from time to time, and a deepening colour passed over her cheeks. I was familiar with these two indications that her feeling heart was stirred whilst her outward manner remained cheerful and calm, and they were the only reward I had striven to obtain. She joyfully accepted the thanks of the party for having persuaded me to read, and in her graceful manner did not deny herself the little satisfaction of having shone in me and through me.

This town visit was not to have lasted long: but our departure was delayed. Frederica did her part for the general entertainment, and I seconded her efforts, but the abundant sources which are so fruitful in the country now failed in the town, and the situation was made more painful by the fact that the elder sister gradually lost all self-control. The two sisters were the only ones there who dressed in German costume. Frederica had never thought of doing anything else, and considered it suitable for all occasions; she never compared herself with anyone else; but Olivia found it unbearable to move about in such polite society, attired so like a maid-servant. In the country she scarcely remarked the town dress of others, and did not wish for it, but in the town she could not endure the country

fashion. All this, together with the different lot of town ladies, and a thousand trifling circumstances totally opposed to her own habits and notions, produced such an effect on her passionate nature, that it took all the power of my flattering attentions, bestowed on her at Frederica's earnest request, to appease her. I feared an impassioned scene. I foresaw the moment when she would throw herself at my feet, and implore me by all that was sacred to rescue her from this situation. She had the most excellent of dispositions if allowed to behave in her own way, but such restraint both made her uncomfortable and might at last even drive her to despair. I now did my best to hasten on what Olivia and her mother both desired, and what was not repugnant to Frederica herself. I had not failed to praise her in contrast to her sister; I told her what pleasure it gave me to find her unaltered, and, even under the present circumstances, just as free as the bird on the bough. She was kind enough to reply that I was there, and that when I was with her she had no wish to go or stay.

At last I saw them drive away, and felt as if a weight fell from my heart; for my feelings had sympathized with those of both sisters; I was not as fiercely troubled as Olivia, but felt by no means as much at my ease as Frederica.

Since my real object in going to Strasburg had been to take my degree, it was part of the irregularity of my life, that I treated this primary business as a matter of entirely secondary importance. I had very easily put aside all anxiety as to my examination, but I now had to think of the *disputation*,* for on my departure from Frankfort I had promised my father, and firmly resolved to write one. It is the fault of those who can do many or even most things, that they imagine they can do everything, and, indeed, it is necessary for youth to feel in this way if it is ever to achieve anything. I had managed to acquire a very fair general survey of jurisprudence and all its subdivisions, and was sufficiently interested in individual points of law, so that with good Leyser for my model, and the help of my small portion of common-sense, I hoped to acquit myself tolerably well. In law great changes were just then taking place;

* A polemic dissertation written on taking a university degree.—*Trans.*

judgments were to be delivered in stricter accordance with equity, all rights established by usage were daily in danger of being compromised, and in the criminal department especially great innovations were impending. As for myself, I felt forcibly how unequal I was to treat the legal subject I had chosen. I lacked the actual knowledge, and the natural promptings from within, urging me to such subjects. Neither was there any impulse from without, for quite another branch of study * had completely carried me away. As a rule, if I was to take any interest in a thing, it must be because I could gain something from it, could see in it some promise of good results and future prospects. I had already jotted down part of the subject-matter, and had collected notes. I now took my books of extracts in hand, and reconsidered the points I wished to maintain, and the general scheme of arrangement I meant to follow, and worked on for a time. But I was soon sensible enough to perceive that I could not get on, and that to treat a special subject, special and unflagging industry is requisite, indeed, that such a special task cannot be successfully accomplished unless one is, if not master, at any rate an old hand in the whole subject.

The friends to whom I confided my difficulties thought me ridiculous, because it is as satisfactory, nay, even better, to dispute upon theses as upon a treatise, and in Strasburg this was a not uncommon practise. I was by no means averse to such an expedient, but when I wrote to my father on the subject, he expressed a desire for some regular piece of work which he was assured I could very well prepare, if I only chose to do so, and allowed myself proper time. I was now compelled to seize upon some general topic, and to choose something which I had at my fingers' ends. Ecclesiastical history was almost better known to me than secular, and that conflict in which the church, the publicly recognized worship of God, is engaged, and always will be engaged, on two sides, had always deeply interested me. For on the one hand it stands in unending conflict with the state, by its desire for supremacy; on the other with individuals, by its wish to gather all men to itself. The state, on its side, will not concede superior authority to the church, and the individual resists its restraints. The state desires everything for public,

* Medicine.—*Trans.*

universal ends; the individual for ends touching the home, the heart, the feelings. From my childhood upwards I had been a witness of such struggles, in which the clergy offended now their superiors, now their congregations. So my youthful mind had come to the conclusion that the state—as legislator—had the right to determine a form of worship, in accordance with which the clergy should teach and to which they should conform, but the outward and external forms of which the laity should be bound strictly to follow; while there should be no question about any individual's private thoughts, feelings, or beliefs. By this means I felt confident all collision could be avoided. I therefore chose for my *disputation* the first half of this theme, namely, that the legislator was not only authorized, but bound to establish a certain form of worship, from which neither the clergy nor the laity might free themselves. I developed this theme partly historically, partly by argument, showing that all public religions had been introduced by leaders of armies, kings, and men of authority; that this had even been the case with Christianity. The example of Protestantism lay close at hand. I went to work at this task all the more boldly, as I really only wrote it to satisfy my father, and desired and hoped nothing better than that it might not pass the censorship. I had imbibed from Behrisch an unconquerable dislike to seeing anything of mine in print, and my intercourse with Herder had revealed to me but too plainly my own insufficiency, and had quite matured in me a certain mistrust of my own powers.

As I drew almost entirely on my own resources in this composition, and wrote and spoke Latin with fluency, the time I spent on the treatise passed very pleasantly for me. The subject-matter had at least some foundation, the style, as a piece of rhetoric, was tolerable, the whole fairly well rounded off. As soon as I had finished it, I went through it with a good Latin scholar, who, although he could not improve my style as a whole, yet easily removed all glaring defects, so that the whole production was fit to appear. A fair copy was at once sent to my father, who, though disapproving of me for not working out any of the subjects previously taken in hand, still, as a thorough Protestant, could not but be pleased with the boldness of the plan. My singular views were tolerated, my exertions praised,

and he hoped for excellent results from the publication of the work.

I now handed over my papers to the faculty, who fortunately behaved in a manner as prudent as it was polite. The dean, a vigorous, clever man, began with many praises of my work, then went on to touch on questionable points, which he gradually contrived to represent as dangerous, and concluded by saying that it might not be advisable to publish this work as an academical dissertation. The *aspirant* had shown himself to the faculty as a thoughtful young man, full of promise; they would willingly, not to delay the affair, allow me to dispute on *theses*. I could afterwards publish my treatise, either in its present form or further elaborated, in Latin, or in another language. This would be easy for me anywhere as a private individual and a Protestant, and I should have the pleasure of winning more genuine and more general applause. I could hardly hide from the good man what a weight his words rolled from my heart; at every new argument which he advanced, to avoid hurting or annoying me by his refusal, my mind grew more at ease, and so did his own at last, when, quite unexpectedly, I offered no opposition to his reasons, but, on the contrary, declared them extremely obvious, and promised to follow his advice and guidance. So I resumed my studies with my *repetent*. *Theses* were chosen and printed, and the *disputation*, thanks to the opposition of my fellow-boarders, went on with great merriment, and even with ease, for my old habit of finding out passages in the *Corpus Juris* was very serviceable to me, and helped me to pass for a well-informed man. A good refection, according to established custom, concluded the ceremony.

My father, however, was very dissatisfied that my little treatise had not been properly printed as a *disputation*, because he had hoped that I should gain honour by it on my return to Frankfort. He therefore wished to publish it privately, but I represented to him that the subject, which was here only sketched, might be more fully developed at some future time. He put by the manuscript carefully for this purpose, and many years afterwards I found it among his papers.

I took my degree on August 6th, 1771; and on the

following day Schöpflin died, in the 75th year of his age. Even without closer intercourse he had had an important influence upon me; for eminent contemporaries may be compared to the greater stars, towards which, so long as they stand above the horizon, our eye can turn, and feel strengthened and improved by the mere contemplation of such perfection. Bountiful nature had given Schöpflin an attractive exterior, a slender figure, kindly eyes, an expressive mouth, and a presence full of charm. Nor had she been sparing in mental endowments to her favourite; and his good fortune was the result of innate and carefully cultivated gifts, without any painful exertion on his part. He was one of those happy men, who tend to unite the past and the present, and understand how to connect historical knowledge with the interests of actual life. Born in the duchy of Baden, educated at Basle and Strasburg, he belonged peculiarly to the lovely Rhine valley—a wide-spreading, gloriously situated fatherland. His mind, directed by circumstances to historical and antiquarian objects, made them its own by the aid of a felicitous imagination, and retained them by the help of a most serviceable memory. Desirous as he was both of learning and of teaching, his progress was continual, both in his studies and in his practical life. He soon made his mark among men, and rose above them without hindrance, distinguishing himself in literary and social circles alike, for historical knowledge is current everywhere, and affability meets everywhere with response. He travelled through Germany, Holland, France, and Italy; came in contact with all the learned men of his time; amused princes, and was only found tedious by their attendants when meals or audiences were lengthened by his lively loquacity. On the other hand, he acquired the confidence of the statesmen, worked out for them most profound legal problems, and so everywhere found scope to exercise his talents. In many places they did their best to keep him, but he remained faithful to Strasburg and the French court. His stubborn German honesty was recognized even there, he even found protection against the powerful Prætor Klinglin, who was secretly his enemy. Sociable and talkative by nature, he extended his social intercourse as much as his knowledge and occupations; and we should

hardly be able to understand how he found time for everything, did we not know that a dislike for women accompanied him through his whole life; and by that means he gained many days and hours which are happily squandered by those who are well-disposed to the society of the fairer sex.

For the rest, as an author, he gave himself to the common weal, and, as an orator, to the multitude. His monographs, his speeches, and addresses are devoted to the events of the day, some to approaching solemnity; even his great work, *Alsatia Illustrata*, belongs to actual life, through his faculty of recalling the past, of conferring new brightness to fading forms, new life to hewn and sculptured stone, and of calling up obliterated and broken inscriptions once again before the eyes and mind of his reader. It is thus that his activity filled all Alsace and the neighbouring country; that in Baden and the Palatinate he preserved even until extreme old age an uninterrupted influence; at Mannheim he founded the Academy of Sciences, and remained president of it till his death.

I never came into contact with this eminent man, excepting on the one night when we gave him a torchlight serenade. Our pitch torches gave more smoke than light in the courtyard of the old club-house, with its spreading lime trees. When our music stopped, he came forward and stepped into the midst of us; and here, too, was in his element. The genial old man stood before us—a slight, well-built figure, dignified, yet at ease and unconstrained—and held us not unworthy of the honour of a thoughtful address, which he delivered in his friendly, fatherly way, without a trace of restraint or pedantry, so that we really thought ourselves of importance for the moment; for, indeed, he treated us as he would have done the kings and princes he had been so often called upon to address in public. We testified our satisfaction by loud applause, by blowing of trumpets and beating of drums, and then the dear, hopeful academic *plebs* found its way home happy and contented.

His pupils and fellow-students, Koch and Oberlin, were men with whom I was more intimate. My taste for antiquarian research was passionate. They often admitted me

to the museum, which contained many of the specimens used for his great work on Alsace. I had not known even this work well until after my journey to that country, when I had found antiquities on the spot, and now, thanks to these further researches, I could, on longer or shorter expeditions, imagine to myself the valley of the Rhine as a Roman possession, and add the necessary colouring to many a dream of times past.

No sooner had I made some progress in this direction, than Oberlin turned my attention to the monuments of the middle ages, and made me acquainted with the ruins and remains, the seals and documents, which survive from that period; and even tried to inspire me with a taste for the so-called "Minnesinger" (love poets) and "Heldendichter" (early epic poets). I owe much to this worthy man, as well as to Herr Koch; and if matters had gone as they wished, I should have had to thank them for the happiness of my life. This is how the matter stood—

Schöpflin, who his whole life through had moved in the higher ranges of the science of constitutional law, and well knew the great influence which these and kindred studies are likely to procure for an able man in courts and cabinets, felt an insuperable and unjust aversion to the position of a practitioner in civil law, and had inspired his pupils with like sentiments. The two men mentioned above, who were friends of Salzmann, had taken a most friendly interest in me. My eager grasp of objective facts, the power I had of representing them to their best advantage, and of heightening their interest, were qualities in me which they prized even more highly than I did myself. My slight, I may say, scanty acquaintance with civil law, had not escaped their notice; they were well enough acquainted with me to know how easily I was influenced; I had made no secret of my liking for an academic life, and they therefore hoped to win me over to history, constitutional law, and rhetoric, at first for a time only, but afterwards more decidedly. Strasburg itself offered plenty of advantages. The possible opening at the German Chancery at Versailles, the precedent of Schöpflin, whose merits, indeed, seemed to me unattainable, were such as to incite to emulation, if not to imitation; and this seemed to them an opportunity of

developing a similar talent, which might prove both profitable to its owner and useful to others who might make use of it to their advantage. These patrons of mine, and Salzmann with them, set great store on my memory and my feeling for languages, and chiefly laid stress on these in support of their views and projects.

I now intend to describe how all this came to nothing, and how it happened that I again passed over from the French to the German side. Let me be allowed, as heretofore, some general observations, by way of transition.

There are few biographies which can represent a genuine, undisturbed, and steady progress on the part of the individual. Our personal life, like the universe in which we move, is, in an incomprehensible manner, a compromise between freedom and necessity. Our will is a prediction of what we shall do, under any given circumstances. But these circumstances lay hold on us in their own way. The *what* lies within us, the *how* seldom depends on us, we dare not ask after the *wherefore*, and on this account we are rightly referred to the *quia*.

French I had always liked from my earliest days; I became acquainted with the language through a stirring life, and with a stirring life through the language. It had become my own, like a second mother-tongue, without the aid of grammar or instruction—merely by conversation and practice. I was now anxious to be still more fluent in it, and therefore gave Strasburg the preference over other universities in my choice of a second academic residence, but, alas! I was here to experience the very reverse of my hopes, and to be repelled by the French language and French manners rather than attracted to them.

The French, in their love of politeness, are indulgent towards foreigners who begin to speak their language; they will not laugh at anyone for a mistake, or blame him in so many words. But, as they cannot endure sins committed against their language, they have a manner of repeating, and, as it were, courteously emphasizing what has been said in other words, at the same time making use of the correct expression which was wanted; thus leading an intelligent and attentive hearer to a right and proper use.

Now in spite of the advantage gained and the progress

one may make if one is in earnest, and has sufficient self-denial to profess oneself a pupil, still this plan always entails some degree of humiliation; and since the speaker is mainly interested in his subject-matter, he is liable to feel too much interrupted, or even distracted, and to let the conversation drop impatiently. This happened to me more than to others, as I always thought I had something interesting to say, and, on the other hand, desired to hear something important, and did not like being always brought back to the question of form,—a not infrequent occurrence with me, as my French was much more motley than that of any other foreigner. I had studied the accent and idiom of footmen, valets, sentries, actors, young and old, theatrical lovers, peasants, and heroes; and this Babel of idiom was still more confused by another odd ingredient, as I liked to listen to the French reformed clergy, and often frequented their churches, especially as a Sunday walk to Bockenheim with such an object in view was not only permitted but enjoined. But this was not all, for as in my youth I had always cared most for 16th century German, I soon learnt to include the French writings of that splendid period among these objects of my predilection. Montaigne, Amyot, Rabelais, Marot, were my friends, and excited my sympathy and delight. Now all these various elements mingled chaotically in my speech, so that the hearer lost the meaning in the oddity of the expression; indeed, an educated Frenchman was driven to put aside courteous correction, and to censure and tutor me in plain terms. So there happened to me here once more what had happened in Leipzig, only that this time I could not appeal to the right of speaking the idiom of my native district just as other provincials did; but being on foreign ground, was forced to adapt myself to the laws of tradition.

Perhaps we might even have resigned ourselves, if an evil genius had not whispered in our ears that all endeavours by a foreigner to speak French must be unsuccessful; for any practised ear can perfectly well detect a German, Italian, or Englishman under his French mask. One is tolerated, but never received into the bosom of the only Catholic speaking church.

Only a few exceptions were admitted. Herr von Grimm

was mentioned; but even Schöpflin, it seemed, did not reach perfection. They allowed that he had early seen the necessity of expressing himself in French with absolute correctness; they approved of his readiness to converse with everyone, and especially to entertain the great and persons of distinguished rank; they praised him for the fact that living in his position, he had made the language of the country his own, and had endeavoured as much as possible to make himself a Frenchman socially and oratorically. But what does he gain by the rejection of his mother-tongue, and his endeavours to acquire a foreign one? He falls between two stools. In society they are pleased to deem him vain; as if anyone would or could converse with others without some self-respect and self-complacency! Then refined connoisseurs in manners and language assert that there is more of dissertation and dialogue than of real conversation in his talk. The former was generally acknowledged as the original and fundamental sin of the Germans, the latter as the cardinal virtue of the French. As a public orator he fares no better. If he prints a polished address to king or princes, the Jesuits, who are ill-disposed to him as a Protestant, lie in wait for him, and pick out turns of expression that are not French.

Instead of finding comfort in this, and as green wood bearing the lot of the seasoned timber, we were annoyed at such pedantic injustice. We fell into despair, and were rather convinced by this striking example that it was a vain endeavour to try to satisfy the French by the subject-matter itself, as they are too closely tied to those conventional forms which they demand in all cases. We therefore embraced the opposite alternative of discarding the French language altogether, and of concentrating our energies more zealously than ever on our own mother-tongue.

And for this we found opportunity and sympathy in our everyday life. Alsace had not been connected with France so long as to lose in old or young an affectionate adherence to the old constitution, manners, language, and costume. If the conquered must of necessity lose half their existence, they yet look upon it as a disgrace voluntarily to part with the other half. They therefore hold fast to all that recalls the good old time, and encourages the hope that

better times will return. Very many inhabitants of Strasburg formed small societies, separate, indeed, but of one spirit, and these were continually increased and recruited by the numerous subjects of German princes who held considerable lands under French sovereignty, since fathers and sons, either for the sake of study or business, would reside a longer or shorter time in Strasburg.

At our table nothing but German was spoken. Salzmann expressed himself in French with fluency and elegance; but, in his aims and actions, was a perfect German. Lerse might have been set up as the model of a German youth. Meyer, of Lindau, liked too well to dawdle along in good German to care to brace himself to the effort of good French; and if, among the rest, many were inclined to the language and manners of the French, yet, while they were with us, they allowed the general tone to prevail with them.

From the language we turned to political affairs. We had not, indeed, much to say in praise of our own imperial constitution. We granted that it consisted purely of legal abuses; but still thought it infinitely superior to the present French constitution, which was a maze of lawless abuses, while the government only showed its energy in the wrong place, and was forced to admit that a complete change was already openly prophesied with black forebodings.

If, on the other hand, we looked towards the north, Frederick shone upon us, the polar star, around whom Germany, Europe, nay, the whole world seemed to revolve. His predominating power in all directions was most strongly manifested when the Prussian drill and even the Prussian stick were introduced into the French army. For the rest, we forgave him his predilection for a foreign language, since we felt satisfaction that his French poets, philosophers, and *littérateurs* continued to annoy him, and often declared that he was to be considered and treated as a mere intruder.

But what alienated us from the French more than all, was the impolite and reiterated opinion that the Germans in general, as well as the King, who was striving after French culture, were deficient in taste. We met this kind of talk, which was the burden of every criticism on their part, with silent contempt; but we found it all the more difficult to

come to a clear understanding on the point, as we were assured that Ménage had already said, that French writers had everything but taste, and we had also learned from the Paris of the present day, that all the newest authors were wanting in taste, and that Voltaire himself could not escape this severest of censures. Our early love and study of nature made us intolerant of everything but truth and genuine feeling, and the direct, downright expression of them.

"Friendship, love, and brotherhood,
Are they not self-understood?"

was the watchword and battle cry, by which the members of our little academic clan knew and hailed their comrades. This maxim lay at the root of all our festive banquets, on which occasions the true spirit of Cousin Michael, with his German comfortable conviviality, did not fail to visit us.

If our readers are inclined to see in what has been hitherto described, mere external contingencies and personal peculiarities, let them call to mind that French literature had in itself certain qualities which were rather repulsive than attractive to the aspirations of youth. It was staid and genteel; and neither of these qualities can delight a youth looking about him for freedom and fulness of life.

Since the sixteenth century, the course of French literature had never been altogether interrupted; civil and religious struggles, as well as foreign wars, seemed only to accelerate its progress; a hundred years ago, so we heard generally maintained, it was already in its full bloom. Thanks to favourable circumstances, an abundant harvest had at once ripened, and been happily gathered in, so that the great talents of the eighteenth century had to be modestly contented with mere gleanings.

In the meanwhile, however, much had grown old-fashioned: first of all comedy, which was in need of continual remodelling to adapt itself, less perfectly, indeed, but still with fresh interest, to actual life and manners. Of the tragedies, many had vanished from the stage, and Voltaire was careful to avail himself of the important opportunity offered him by the editing of Corneille's works, to show how defective his predecessor had been, though, according to the general verdict, he had not equalled him.

And this very Voltaire, the wonder of his time, had grown old, along with the literature of which, for nearly a century, he had been the animating and ruling spirit. By his side there still existed many *littérateurs*, vegetating in a more or less active and happy old age, and then disappearing in their turn one by one. The influence of society upon authors increased more and more; for the best society, consisting of persons of birth, rank, and property, chose literature as one of their chief recreations, making it entirely social and genteel in tone. Persons of rank and literary men mutually cultivated and of necessity mutually perverted one another; for the genteel is naturally exclusive; that is what French criticism became, negative, detracting, and fault-finding. The upper classes applied this kind of criticism to authors; the authors, with somewhat less decorum, used the same procedure towards each other, and even towards their patrons. If the public was not to be awed, they endeavoured to take it by surprise, or to persuade it by humility; and thus—apart from the movements which shook church and state to their inmost core—there arose such a literary ferment, that Voltaire himself had to strain to the utmost all the resources of his activity, and of his literary dictatorship, to keep himself afloat above the torrent of universal censure. As it was, he was openly called an old self-willed child; his indefatigable endeavours were regarded as the vain efforts of decrepit age; those principles, for which he had stood all his life, and to the spread of which he had devoted his days, were no longer held in honour or esteem: nay, that very Deity he acknowledged, and so continued to declare himself free from atheism, was discredited; and thus he himself, the venerable patriarch, was forced, like his youngest competitor, to watch the present moment, to sue for fresh favours—to show too much love to his friends, too much hate to his enemies; and under the appearance of a passionate striving after truth, to act deceitfully and falsely. Was it worth while to have led such a great and active life, if it was to end in greater dependence than it had begun? His high spirit, his delicate sensitiveness, felt only too keenly the galling nature of such a position. He often relieved himself by swift onslaughts, gave the reins to his humour, and exceeded all

bounds,—at which both friends and enemies showed themselves indignant; for everyone thought himself capable of gauging him, though none could equal him. A public which hears only the judgment of old men, becomes over-wise too soon; and nothing is more unsatisfactory than a mature judgment adopted by an immature mind.

We young men, with our German love of truth and nature, considered honesty towards ourselves and others as the best guide in life and art; hence Voltaire's factious dishonesty and his constant perversion of noble subjects became more and more distasteful to us, and our aversion to him grew daily. He seemed never to have done with degrading religion and the Holy Scriptures on which it rests, for the sake of injuring priestcraft,* as they called it, and had thereby awakened in me feelings of irritation. But when I now learned that, to weaken the tradition of a deluge, he had denied the existence of all fossilized shells, and admitted them only as *lusus naturæ*, he entirely lost my confidence; for my own eyes had shown me on the Bastberg, plainly enough, that I stood on what had been the floor of an ancient sea, among the *exuviæ* of its original inhabitants. These mountains had certainly been once covered with waves, whether before or during the deluge did not concern me; it was enough that the valley of the Rhine had been one vast lake, a bay extending further than eye could see; no amount of talk could shake me in this conviction. I hoped, rather, to extend my knowledge of lands and mountains, let the result be what it would.

French literature, then, had grown staid and genteel both in itself and through Voltaire. Let us consider this remarkable man a little more in detail.

From his youth up, Voltaire's wishes and endeavours had been directed to an active and social life, to politics, to prosperity on a large scale, to connections with the potentates of the world, and to a profitable use of these connections, that he himself might become such a potentate in his turn. Few would have cared to make themselves so dependent, for the sake of being independent. He succeeded also in

* "Um den so genannten Pfaffen zu schaden." As we have not the word for a priest, which exactly expresses the contempt involved in "Pfaffe," the word "priest*craft*" has been introduced.—*Trans.*

subjugating minds; the nation became his own. In vain did his opponents display their moderate talents, and their monstrous hate; nothing could injure him. The court he never succeeded in reconciling, but on the other hand, foreign kings were his tributaries; Katharine and Frederick the Great, Gustavus of Sweden, Christian of Denmark, Poniatowsky of Poland, Henry of Prussia, Charles of Brunswick, all acknowledged themselves his vassals; even popes thought they must cajole him by acts of indulgence. That Joseph the Second had kept aloof from him did not at all redound to the honour of this prince, for it would have done him and his undertakings no harm, if, with such a fine mind and with such noble views, he had himself been less lacking in brilliancy and less unappreciative of it in others.

What I have here tried to state connectedly and in a few words was, at the time I speak of, the cry of the moment, a perpetual discord in our ears, unconnected and uninstructive. Nothing was heard but the praise of those who had gone before. The demand was continually for something good and new; yet the newest never found favour. No sooner had a patriot exhibited on the stage, so long sunk in torpor, a French subject of inspiring national interest—no sooner had the *Siege of Calais* won enthusiastic applause, than the piece, together with all its national imitations, was declared void of matter, and in every sense objectionable. Those studies of national manners by which Destouches had so often delighted me as a boy, were styled weak; his honest name was forgotten; and how many authors could I not point out, on whose account I earned the reproach that I judged like a provincial, if I showed any sympathy for such men and their works, in opposition to those who followed the stream of the newest literary fashion.

In this way we became more and more annoying to our other German companions. Our own views and the nature of our character led us to retain the impressions of objects, to assimilate them gradually, and if it had to be, to relinquish them slowly. We were convinced that by faithful observation, and by continued persistence, something might be gained from all things, and that by persevering zeal we must at last reach a point where the grounds of our judgment

might be stated at the same time as the judgment itself. Nor did we fail to perceive that the width and splendour of the French world offered us many advantages and much profit; for Rousseau had really touched our sympathies. Yet we found, on considering his life and fate, that he was nevertheless compelled to find his highest reward in the fact that he was allowed to live unacknowledged and forgotten in Paris.

If we heard the encyclopedists mentioned, or opened a volume of their colossal work, we felt as if we were moving amidst the innumerable whirling spools and looms of a great factory, where, what with the mere creaking and rattling—what with all the mechanism, bewildering both to eyes and brain—what with the mere impossibility of understanding how the various parts fit in and work with one another—what with the contemplation of all that is necessary to prepare a single piece of cloth, we felt disgusted with the very coat we wore upon our backs.

Diderot was sufficiently akin to us, as, indeed, in all the points for which the French blame him, he is a true German. But even his point of view was too lofty, his range of vision too wide for us to be able to rise to his height and place ourselves at his side. Yet the children of nature he continued to produce and to ennoble by his great rhetorical art delighted us: we were enchanted with his brave poachers and smugglers; and this rabble throve later only too well on the German Parnassus. He, too, like Rousseau, by diffusing a disgust of social life, unobtrusively paved the way for those monstrous world-wide changes, in which all that had hitherto existed seemed to be swallowed up.

However, we should now put aside these considerations, and observe what influence these two men have had upon art. Here, too, they pointed to nature and urged us to turn from art and follow her.

The highest problem of all art is to produce by illusion the semblance of a higher reality. But it is a false endeavour to push the realization of the illusion so far that at last only a commonplace reality remains.

The stage had attained the highest advantages by applying the laws of perspective to wings ranged one behind the other; and this very gain they now wantonly wished to

abandon, by closing up the sides of the theatre, so as to form actual chamber-walls. All the rest, the piece itself, the actors' mode of playing, in a word, everything was to be in conformity with this new arrangement of the stage; and thus an entirely new drama was to arise.

The French actors had attained in comedy the height of realism in art. Their residence in Paris, their study of court life, the love intrigues of actors and actresses with members of the upper classes,—all contributed to transplant to the stage the extreme polish and refinement of actual society life; and on this point the advocates of nature found little to blame. However, they thought to advance their cause still further by choosing grave and tragic subjects, which occur also in the life of the middle-classes, by using prose even for lofty themes, and thus banishing unnatural verse, together with unnatural declamation and gestures.

It is a remarkable fact, and one not generally noticed, that at this time, even the old, severe, rhythmical, classic tragedy was threatened with a revolution, which could only be averted by great talents and the power of tradition.

In opposition to the actor Le Cain, who was unusually strict in rendering heroic parts with all the dignity and emphasis of the correct stage tradition, shunning the natural and commonplace, another player, by name Aufresne, had appeared, who declared war against every deviation from nature, and in his tragic acting sought to maintain the strictest realism. This method may have clashed with that of the other Parisian actors. He stood alone, while they kept together, and obstinately adhering to his views, he chose to leave Paris rather than modify them, and passed through Strasburg. Here we saw him act the part of Augustus in *Cinna*, that of Mithridates, and others of the same sort, with the truest and most natural dignity. He was a tall, handsome man, slightly, rather than strongly built, not exactly imposing in his manner, yet refined and pleasing. His acting was thoughtful and quiet, yet not cold, and forcible enough where force was required. He was a thoroughly trained actor, and one of the few who know how to turn art completely into nature, and nature completely into art. It is from a few real artists such as he,

whose excellencies are misunderstood, that the doctrine of false naturalism invariably originates.

And this leads me to make mention of a work, small indeed, but which was epoch-making to a remarkable degree —I mean Rousseau's *Pygmalion*. Much could be said upon it; for this strange production hovers between nature and art, in the mistaken endeavour to resolve the latter into the former. We see an artist who has produced a work of the highest perfection, and yet is not satisfied with having projected his idea outside himself, under artistic form, and with having breathed into it a higher life; no, it must also be dragged down to the level of his own earthly life. He must destroy the highest that hand and brain have produced, by the commonest act of sensuality.

All this and much else, both wise and foolish, true and half-true, worked upon our minds and only served to increase our perplexities; we wandered here and there by many paths, straight and devious, and meanwhile on every side the way was being prepared for that German literary revolution, of which we were witnesses, and to which, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, we were unceasingly contributing.

We had neither desire nor inclination to be enlightened or advanced by the aid of philosophy; on religious subjects we thought we had sufficiently enlightened ourselves, and therefore looked on with comparative indifference at the violent contest between the French philosophers and the priesthood. Prohibited books condemned to the flames, of which so much was heard at the time, produced no effect upon us. I mention as a typical instance, the *Système de la Nature*, which we looked into out of curiosity. We did not understand how such a book could be dangerous. It seemed to us so gloomy, so Cimmerian, so deathlike, that we found it difficult to endure its presence, and shuddered at it as at a spectre. The author fancies he is giving his book a great recommendation, when he declares in his preface, that as a decrepit old man, just sinking into the grave, he is anxious to announce the truth to his contemporaries and to posterity.

We laughed at him; for we thought we had observed that old people are incapable of appreciating whatever is

good and loveable in the world. "Old churches have dark windows.—To know how cherries and berries taste, we must ask children and sparrows." These were our gibes and maxims; and so that book, as the very quintessence of senility, seemed to us insipid, or even offensive. "All had of necessity to be," so said the book, "and therefore there was no God." But could not God also exist of necessity? we asked. We did indeed admit, at the same time, that we could not escape from the necessities of day and night, the seasons, the influence of climate, and from physical and animal conditions; but nevertheless we felt within us something that seemed like perfect freedom of will, and again something which sought to counterbalance this freedom.

We could not give up the hope of becoming more and more rational, of making ourselves more and more independent of external things, and even of ourselves. The word freedom has so fair a sound, that we cannot dispense with it, even though it designates an error.

None of us had read the book through; for it had disappointed the expectation with which we opened it. It had announced a system of nature; and we had, therefore, hoped really to learn something of nature—of this idol of ours. Physics and chemistry, descriptions of heaven and earth, natural history and anatomy, with much besides, had now for years, and up to this very moment, constantly pointed us to the great world and its wealth of beauty; and we would fain have heard more, both in particular and in general, of suns and stars, planets and moons, mountains, valleys, rivers and seas, with all that live and move in them. That in the course of such an exposition much must occur which would appear to the common man as pernicious, to the clergy as dangerous, and to the state as inadmissible, we had no doubt; and we hoped that the small volume had not unworthily undergone the fiery ordeal. But how hollow and empty did we feel this melancholy, atheistic half-night to be, where earth vanished with all its creatures, heaven with all its stars. Matter was supposed to have existed and to have been in motion from all eternity, and to this motion, to right and to left and in every direction, were attributed the infinite phenomena of existence. We might have allowed even so much to pass, if the author, out of his matter in

motion, had really built up the world before our eyes. But he seemed to know as little about nature as we did; for, after simply propounding some general ideas, he forthwith disregards them in order to change what seems above nature, or a higher nature within nature, into matter with weight and motion but without aim or shape—and by this he fancies he has gained much.

If this book did us any harm at all, it was in giving us a hearty and lasting dislike to all philosophy, and especially to metaphysics; while, on the other hand, we threw ourselves into living knowledge, experience, action, and poetry, with all the more zeal and ardour.

Thus, on the very borders of France, we had at one blow got rid of everything French about us. The French way of life was too definite and too genteel for us, their poetry cold, their criticism annihilating, their philosophy abstruse, and yet unsatisfying, so that we were on the point of resigning ourselves to material nature, at least by way of experiment, if another influence had not been long preparing us for higher and broader views of the world, and for intellectual enjoyments as true as they were imaginative—an influence which drew us, first slowly and in secret, but by degrees more and more openly and forcibly.

It is almost superfluous to say that Shakespeare was this new inspiration; and having once said this, no more need be added. The greatness of Shakespeare has been acknowledged by the Germans more than by other nations, perhaps even more than by his own. We have lavished on him all that justice, fairness, and forbearance which we refuse to ourselves. Distinguished men have laboured to show his talents in the most favourable light; and I have always readily subscribed to what has been said in his honour and favour, or even in his excuse. The influence of this extraordinary mind upon me has been already shown; an attempt has been made to touch upon his works, which has met with approval; and therefore this general statement may suffice for the present, until I am in a position to share with such friends as care to hear me, gleanings from those reflections on his great excellencies which I was tempted to insert in this context.

For the present I will content myself with describing more fully how I became acquainted with him. It happened fairly early, in my Leipzig days, through Dodd's *Beauties of Shakespeare*. Whatever may be said against such collections, which give authors in a fragmentary form, they certainly produce many good effects. Our mind is not always composed or alert enough to take in a whole work according to its merits. Do we not, in a book, mark passages which have an immediate reference to ourselves? Young people especially, who are wanting in a thorough education, are laudably excited by brilliant passages; and thus I myself look back upon the time made memorable for me by this work as one of the most delightful epochs of my life. Those noble characteristics, great sayings, happy descriptions, and humorous traits—one and all struck me powerfully.

Wieland's translation next made its appearance. It was devoured, imparted and recommended to friends and acquaintances. We Germans were fortunate in having many great works of foreign nations first introduced to us in an easy and attractive form. Shakespeare, translated in prose, first by Wieland, afterwards by Eschenburg, appeared in a form universally intelligible, and suitable to any reader, and this was one of the causes of its rapid diffusion and enormous influence. I honour both the rhythm and the rhyme, by which poetry first becomes poetry; but what is really deeply and fundamentally effective — what is truly educative and inspiring, is what remains of the poet when he is translated into prose. What is left is the pure and perfect essence, which beauties of form may strive to simulate when absent, and when present serve only to conceal. I therefore consider prose translations more advantageous than verse, in a boy's early education; for it may be observed that boys, whose nature it is to turn everything into jest, delight in the mere sound of words and the rhythm of syllables, and by a mischievous instinct of parody would destroy the serious purport of the finest work. For this reason I would throw out the suggestion that a prose translation of Homer should be next undertaken; in that case the work must be worthy of the high rank which German literature holds at the present day. I leave all these

considerations to our worthy pedagogues, who have a wider experience on such subjects. I will only, in support of my proposal, mention Luther's translation of the Bible; for by transposing into our mother tongue a work composed in so many different styles, and by rendering its varying tones, —poetical, historical, authoritative and didactic—as if they were all cast in one mould, this great man has done far more to advance the cause of religion than if he had attempted to imitate, in detail, the peculiarities of the original. All subsequent endeavours to make us appreciate Job, the Psalms, and the other lyrical books in their poetical form have been vain. For the multitude, who are here chiefly concerned, a plain translation still remains the best. Those critical translations which vie with the original, really only serve for the amusement of the learned among themselves.

And so great did the influence of Shakespeare become on our Strasburg society, whether translated or in the original, by fragments or as a whole, by passages or by extracts, that just as we find Bible specialists, so we gradually made ourselves specialists in Shakespeare, imitated in our conversations those virtues and defects of his time with which he had made us so well acquainted, took the greatest delight in his "quibbles," * did our best to emulate him not only by translating them, but even by original efforts of our own. My own personal enthusiasm for Shakespeare contributed not a little in producing this effect. My friends caught the infection of that inspiration which I so willingly acknowledged, and they all yielded to the same influence. We did not deny the possibility of improving our knowledge of his merits, of comprehending them better, and of judging them with more penetration, but this we reserved for a later date. For the present all we desired was to be joyful sharers and eager imitators of his spirit; in our keen enjoyment of his works, we had no wish to test or criticize the man to whom we owed it, but rather unconditionally to revere him.

If any one would learn at first hand what was thought, talked about, and discussed in this animated society, let him

* This English word is used in the original.—*Trans.*

read Herder's essay on Shakespeare, in the volume on German character and art (*Von Deutscher Art und Kunst*), and also Lenz's remarks on the theatre (*Anmerkungen übers Theater*), to which was appended a translation of *Love's Labour's Lost*.* Herder penetrates into the depths of Shakespeare's nature, and renders it in noble characters; Lenz acts more as an iconoclast against the traditions of the stage, and demands that every subject should in every case be treated in Shakespeare's manner. Since I have here had occasion to mention this clever and eccentric individual, it is perhaps a fitting opportunity to attempt some account of him. I did not become acquainted with him till towards the end of my residence in Strasburg. We seldom saw each other, his friends were not mine, but we sought opportunities of meeting, and were fond of talking together, because, as was natural in youths of the same age, we entertained very similar views. He had a short, neat figure, a delightful head, small and well-shaped, and correspondingly delicate, though rather flattened features; blue eyes, fair hair, in short, a youth such as one meets occasionally in the north; a soft, almost cautious step, a pleasant but hesitating flow of speech, and a manner which, fluctuating between reserve and shyness, well became his years. He had a talent for reading short poems, especially his own, aloud, and wrote a good hand. The cast of his mind is best described by the English word "whimsical," which, as the dictionary shows, comprises very many peculiarities in one word. No one, perhaps, was better fitted than he to feel and imitate the extravagance and exuberance of Shakespeare's genius. To this the above-mentioned translation bears witness. He treated his author with great freedom, was far from literal or faithful, but yet knew so well how to put on the armour, or rather the motley jerkin, of his predecessor, how to adapt himself so humorously to his gestures, that he could not fail to win the applause of all those to whom such things appeal.

The absurdities of the clowns were our special delight, and we esteemed Lenz a favoured man indeed, when he

* A complete edition of Lenz's works was published by Tieck in 1828. In that will be found the essay and play in question, to the last of which he gives the name *Amor vincit omnia.—Trans.*

succeeded in rendering as follows the epitaph on the deer shot by the princess :—

"Die schöne Prinzessin schoss und traf
Eines jungen Hirschleins Leben ;
Es fiel dahin in schweren Schlaf,
Und wird ein Brätlein geben.
Der Jagdhund boll ! Ein L zu Hirsch,
So wird es denn ein Hirschel ;
Doch setzt ein römisch L zu Hirsch,
So macht es funfzig Hirschel.
Ich mache hundert Hirsche draus,
Schreib' Hirschell mit zwei LLen."*

The love of the absurd, which appears free and unfettered in youth, but later recedes into the background, though never utterly lost, was at its height among us, and we tried to celebrate our great master by original jests. It was our greatest pride to lay before the company something in this line which found favour, as, for instance, the following verses on a riding-master, who had been hurt riding an unbroken horse :—

"A rider in this house you'll find,
A master too is he,
The two into a nosegay bind,
'Twill riding-master be.
If master of the ride, I wis,
Full well he bears the name,
But if the ride the master is,
On him and his be shame." †

* The lines in Shakspeare, which the above are intended to imitate, are the following :—

"The praiseful princess pierc'd and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket ;
Some say a sore ; but not a sore, till now made sore with shooting.
The dogs did yell ; put L to sore, then sorel jumps from thicket ;
Or pricket sore, or else sorel ; the people fall a-hooting.
If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores, O sore L !
Of one sore I an hundred make, by adding but one more L."

Lenz's words, which cannot be rendered intelligibly into English, furnish an instance of Goethe's meaning, when he commends Lenz as happily catching the spirit of the original, without the slightest pretence to accuracy.—*Trans.*

† The above doggrel is pretty faithful, but it is as well to give the original—

Serious discussions were held as to whether such productions were worthy of the clown or not, whether they flowed from the genuine pure spring of folly, or whether they did not suffer from an unfitting and inadmissible taint of sense and reason. Moreover, our singular views could find a wider field and a larger number of sympathizers, since Lessing, whose views had won universal confidence, had, in fact, been the first to pave the way for such ideas in his *Dramaturgie*.

It was in the company of such eager spirits as these that I took many a pleasant excursion into Upper Alsace, but for this very reason derived little practical instruction from them. Many little fragments of verse which we extemporised on all such occasions, and which might serve as a lively commentary on our journeys, are lost. In the transept of Molsheim Abbey we admired the painted windows; in the fertile district between Colmar and Schlettstadt we poured forth burlesque hymns to Ceres, and at the same time discussed in detail and extolled the consumption of so many kinds of fruit, and jestingly thrashed out the important question of protection or free trade in the sale of such products. At Ensisheim we saw the monstrous aerolite hanging up in the church, and following the scepticism of the time, ridiculed the credulity of man, never suspecting that such air-born bodies, if they might not actually fall in our cornfields, would at any rate be preserved in our cabinets.

I still love to think of a pilgrimage to the Ottilienberg, which we took in the company of hundreds, nay, thousands of the faithful. Here, among the still extant traces of the foundations of a Roman castle, a count's beautiful daughter, following the promptings of her devout spirit, was said to have dwelt among ruins and stony crevices. Near the chapel where the pilgrims worship, her well is shown, and

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"Ein Ritter wohnt in diesem Haus,
Ein Meister auch daneben;
Macht man davon einen Blumenstrauss,
So wird's einen Rittmeister geben.
Ist er nun Meister von dem Ritt,
Führt er mit Recht den Namen;
Doch nimmt der Ritt den Meister mit,
Weh' ihm und seinem Samen!"—*Trans.*

many charming anecdotes are told. Her name, and the vision which I formed of her, made a deep impression on me. I carried both about with me for many years, until at last I bestowed them on one of my later, but not less beloved daughters,* so kindly received by many pure and pious hearts.

Seen from this eminence, Alsace lies once more before us in all her beauty, always the same, and always new. Just as in an amphitheatre, wherever one may sit, one has a view of every one present, but most plainly of one's neighbours; so it is here with bushes, rocks, hills, woods, fields, meadows, and townships, both close at hand and in the distance. They even tried to show us Basle on the horizon; I will not swear that we actually saw it, but the blue haze of the Swiss mountains again made us feel their spell, by summoning us to them, and since we could not follow the impulse, by leaving us with a feeling of sadness.

I yielded all the more readily to such distractions and amusements, and even to excess, because the ties of love binding me to Frederica now began to trouble me. A youthful passion of this kind, born at haphazard, may be compared to a bomb thrown in the night, which shoots upwards in a soft and glowing track, mingles with the stars, nay, for a moment, seems to pause among them, then descending describes the same path, but in the reverse direction, bringing with it destruction to the spot where it terminates its course. Frederica did not change; she seemed not to think, nor to wish to think, that our relation could end so soon. Olivia, on the contrary, who, though she grieved over my absence, had not so much at stake as her sister, had more foresight, or was more candid. She often spoke to me about my probable final departure, and sought to console herself both on her own and her sister's account. A girl who gives up a man from whom she has not concealed her affection, is far from being in that painful situation in which a youth finds himself who has gone equally far in his declarations to a lady. He always plays a pitiful part, since, as a growing man, some grasp of his general situation is expected of him, and evident levity ill becomes his years.

* By this *daughter* he means "Ottilie" in the *Elective Affinities*.—*Trans.*

A girl's reasons for drawing back always seem sufficient, those of a man—never.

But how should the flattering voice of passion allow us to foresee whither it may lead us? For even when our reason has prompted us to renounce it, we cannot get free from it; we still delight in the charming habit, even if under an altered form. Thus it was with me. Although the presence of Frederica pained me, I knew of nothing pleasanter than to think of her when absent, and to hold imaginary converse with her. I went to see her less frequently, but our correspondence was all the more animated. She could write of her doings with brightness and of her feelings with charm, and in my replies I was stirred to fervent and passionate realization of her virtues. Absence freed me from restraint, and my whole affection first truly expanded in this intercourse at a distance. At such moments I could be blind to the future; in this I was helped by the rapid flight of time and the pressure of many occupations. I had hitherto made it possible to pursue the most varied interests by always engrossing myself in the present and in matters of immediate moment; but towards the end all events crowded too closely on one another, as is always the case when we are breaking off our relations with any given place.

Another trivial occurrence deprived me of the last days. I was the guest of people of position at a country-house, from which there was a fine view of the front of the minster, and of the tower rising above it. "It is a pity," said some one, "that the whole was not finished, and that we have only the one tower." "It is just as regrettable to me," I answered, "to see this one tower not quite completed, for the four volutes leave off much too bluntly; there should have been above them four light spires, with a higher one in the middle where that clumsy cross now stands."

Having given vent to this strong opinion with my usual vehemence, I was addressed by a lively little man who asked, "Who told you so?" "The tower itself," I replied; "I have observed it so long and so carefully, and have shown it so much affection, that at last it resolved to make me this open confession." "It has not misinformed you," he answered; "I can speak with some authority; for I have been appointed curator of public buildings here. We still

have among our archives the original sketches, which confirm what you have said, and which I can show you." As I was to leave very soon I begged him to do me this favour as soon as possible. He let me see the precious rolls; and I was soon able, with the help of oiled paper, to draw the spires missing in the building as it now stands, and much regretted that I had not known of this treasure sooner. But this was always to be the case with me, to arrive at an idea laboriously by study and observation, which perhaps would not have been so striking and so profitable for me if I had received it secondhand.

Yet amid all this hurry and confusion I could not resist seeing Frederica once more. Those were painful days, whose memory has not remained with me. When I held out my hand to her from my horse, the tears stood in her eyes, and my heart was heavy. I rode along the footpath towards Drusenheim, and here one of the most singular forebodings took possession of me. I saw, not with the eyes of the body, but with those of the mind, my own figure coming towards me, on horseback, and on the same road, attired in a dress which I had never worn;—it was pike-grey with some gold about it. But as I shook myself out of this dream, the figure had entirely disappeared. It is strange, however, that eight years afterwards, I found myself on that very road, on my way to pay one more visit to Frederica, wearing the dress of which I had dreamed, and that, not from choice, but by accident. Whatever one may think on such matters in general, in this instance my strange illusion helped to calm me in this farewell hour. It softened for me the pain of leaving for ever lovely Alsace, with all that it had brought me, and now that I had at last put behind me the painful strain of parting, I regained my peace of mind on a peaceful and pleasant journey.

As soon as I reached Mannheim, I hastened eagerly to see the museum of antiquities, of which I had heard such high praises. Even at Leipzig I had heard much discussion of these important works of art in connection with Winckelmann's and Lessing's writings, but I had seen little of them, for with the exception of the father in the Laocoon group, and the Faun with the castanets, there were no casts in the academy, and anything Oeser chose to say to us on the

subject of those works, was necessarily most obscure to us. But how is it possible to give to beginners a conception of the true end of art?

Verschaffel, the director, received me most kindly. I was conducted to the museum by one of his colleagues, who opened it for me, and then left me to look and examine as I pleased. So there I stood, open to the most wonderful impressions, in a spacious square hall, which, owing to its great height, was almost cubical, and was well lighted from above by windows under the cornice. The noblest statues of antiquity were not only ranged along the walls, but also stood in groups all about the room, forming a forest of statues, through which one had to thread one's way; a great ideal popular assembly, through which one was obliged to force a passage. All these noble forms could be placed in the most advantageous light by drawing or pulling back the curtains, and besides this, were moveable on their pedestals, and could be turned round at pleasure.

After I had borne for a while the first overwhelming impression, I turned to those figures which most attracted me, and who can deny that the Apollo Belvedere, with his colossal yet not gigantic proportions, his slender build, his easy grace, and conquering glance, held us captive more than all the rest? I next turned to the Laocoon, whom I saw for the first time with his sons. I called to mind as clearly as I could the discussions and arguments which had been waged about him, and tried to get a point of view of my own, but felt myself drawn, now this way and now that. The dying gladiator held me long, but it was the group of Castor and Pollux, that precious though enigmatic relic, that afforded me the keenest pleasure. I did not know till then how impossible it is to account on the spur of the moment for the delight inspired by the contemplation of any lovely object. I forced myself to consider, and, far as I was from arriving at any clear conclusion, I still felt that every single work of art in this vast collection was capable of interpretation, was natural and had a significance of its own.

Nevertheless my attention was chiefly turned to the Laocoon, and I answered for myself the famous question, why he did not cry aloud by declaring that it was impossible he should do so. All the actions and movements of the

three figures sprang, in my opinion, from the original conception of the group. The whole position—as forcible as it was artistic—of the chief figure was designed with reference to two impulses: the struggle with the snakes, and the recoil from the momentary bite. To lessen the pain, the abdomen must be drawn in, and shrieking consequently made impossible. I also decided that the younger son was not bitten, and in other respects tried to elicit from the group its full artistic merits. I wrote a letter on the subject to Oeser, who, however, did not seem to give much heed to my interpretation, but only replied, encouraging my zeal in very general terms. I was, however, fortunate enough to retain those impressions and to bear them in my mind for many years, until I was at last able to connect them with the rest of my experiences and convictions, and to publish them in this way when editing my *Propylæa*.

My eager study of these masterpieces of plastic art was to be followed by a foretaste of ancient architecture. I came across the cast of a capital of the Rotunda, and cannot deny that at the sight of those acanthus leaves, so massive yet so graceful, my faith in northern architecture was somewhat shaken.

This experience of my early days, though destined to be of lasting influence through my whole life, was attended with very little immediate result. How willingly would I begin rather than end a book with this description; for no sooner had the door of the great hall closed behind me, than I struggled to return to my former self and to free my imagination from the oppression of these forms, and I was only brought back to their sphere of influence by long and devious paths. Yet it is impossible to overestimate the quiet influence of those impressions which we allow ourselves to accept and enjoy without attempting to dissect or criticize them. Youth is the age for such high enjoyment, if it will forget to be critical and allow what is great and good to exercise its influence without examination or analysis.

TWELFTH BOOK

THE wanderer had now at last reached home,—more healthy and cheerful than on the first occasion,—but there was still about him something over-strained, which did not point to perfect health of mind. From the outset I placed my mother in the position of having to establish some kind of compromise in the differences continually arising between my father's legitimate love of order and my own manifold eccentricities. At Mainz, a boy who played the harp had so pleased me, that, as the Fair was close at hand, I invited him to Frankfort, and promised to give him lodging and to encourage him. This occurrence is another example of a peculiarity which has cost me so much in my lifetime,—that is, a pleasure in seeing younger people gather round me and attach themselves to me, until in the end I find myself burdened with their fate. One unpleasant experience after another failed to cure me of this inborn instinct, which even to-day, in spite of my clear conviction, threatens from time to time to lead me astray. My mother foresaw more clearly than I, how strange it would seem to my father, if a strolling musician were to go from such a respectable house as ours to taverns and public-houses to earn his bread. Hence she provided him with board and lodging in the neighbourhood. I recommended him to my friends; and thus the lad did not fare badly. Several years after, I saw him again: he had grown taller and more ungainly, without having made much progress in his art. My good mother, well pleased with this first attempt at reconciling and hushing up our differences, little thought that this art of hers would in the near future become absolutely necessary. My father, leading a contented life amid his old tastes and occupations, was comfortably at ease, like one who has carried out his plans in spite of all hindrances and delays.

I had now taken my degree, which meant that the first step was made towards the civic career opening before me. My *Disputation* had won his applause; a further examination of it, and many preparations for a future edition now occupied his time. During my residence in Alsace, I had written many little poems, essays, notes on travel, and casual jottings. He found amusement in collecting these under headings, in arranging them, and in suggesting their completion; and was delighted with the hope that my hitherto insuperable dislike to seeing any of these things printed might soon be overcome. My sister had collected around her a circle of intelligent and attractive women. Without being overbearing, she ruled them all, for her good sense helped her to overlook much, and her kindly feeling often smoothed over difficulties; moreover, she was in the position to play the confidant, rather than the rival. Of my older friends and companions, I found in Horn a constant, loyal friend and a cheerful companion. I also became intimate with Riese, who did not fail to put my wits to the test, and to keep them in practice by constantly opposing contradiction, doubt and negation to that dogmatic enthusiasm into which I too readily fell. Others, by degrees, joined this circle, whom I shall have occasion to mention later; but among those who rendered my new sojourn in my native city pleasant and profitable to me, the brothers Schlosser certainly take the first place. The elder, Hieronymus, a learned and philosophic jurist, enjoyed universal confidence as a legal adviser. His favourite abode was amongst his books and papers, in rooms where the greatest order prevailed; there I have never found him other than cheerful and sympathizing. In society, too, he showed himself pleasant and entertaining, for his mind, thanks to his extensive reading, was adorned with all the beauties of the classics. He did not, on occasion, disdain to add to the amusement of the company by witty Latin poems; and I still possess several playful distichs which he wrote under some caricatures drawn by me of eccentric and well-known Frankfort characters. Often I consulted with him as to the course of life and business on which I was now entering; and if a hundred varying distractions, moods and passions had not torn me from this path, he would have been my surest guide.

Nearer to me, in point of age, was his brother Georg, who had returned from Treptow, on retiring from the service of the Duke Eugene of Würtemberg. While gaining in knowledge of the world and practical skill, he had retained his interest in the progress of German and foreign literatures. He liked, as before, to write in all languages; but no longer influenced me in this direction, as I had devoted myself exclusively to German, and only cultivated other languages enough to enable me, in some measure, to read the best authors in the original. His upright spirit was unchanged; indeed, his acquaintance with the world seemed to have caused him to adhere with more severity and even obstinacy to the integrity of his principles.

Through these two friends, I very soon made the acquaintance of Merck, to whom I had been recommended by Herder when he was in Strasburg. This strange man, who was to have the greatest influence on my life, was a native of Darmstadt. Of his early education I can say little. After finishing his studies, he became travelling companion to a young man in Switzerland; here he remained some time, and came back married. When I made his acquaintance, he was military paymaster at Darmstadt. Naturally endowed with sense and talent, he had acquired extensive knowledge, especially in modern literature, and had devoted much study to the history of the world and of mankind in all countries and epochs. He had a talent for judging with decision and acumen. He was esteemed a thorough and decided man of business, and a skilled accountant. He was readily received everywhere, as a pleasant companion by all those to whom he had not made himself formidable by sarcasms. In figure he was tall and thin; his sharp nose was a prominent feature; light blue, perhaps grey eyes, gave something tiger-like to the expression of his active, restless glances. Lavater's *Physiognomy* has preserved his profile for us. His character presented an extraordinary contradiction. By nature good, noble, and upright, he had grown so bitter against the world, and allowed this perverse, morbid feeling to gain such power over him, that he felt an irresistible inclination to be of set purpose a rogue, or even a villain. Sensible, quiet,

kind at one moment, it might occur to him in the next—just as a snail puts out his horns—to do something which might hurt, wound, or even injure another. Yet the attraction which we feel in dealing with a danger from which we believe ourselves safe made me all the more inclined to live with him, and to enjoy his good qualities, since a confident feeling assured me that he would not turn his bad side towards me. Now while this morally restless turn of mind, —this necessity of treating men with spite and malice, to some extent spoiled his social life, another source of disquiet, which he also carefully fostered, proved fatal to his peace of mind; he felt a certain amateurish impulse to production, in which he indulged the more readily, as he expressed himself easily and happily in prose and verse, and might well hope to play a part among the men of letters of the time. I myself still possess epistles, in verse of no ordinary boldness, force, and Swift-like venom, which are highly remarkable from their original views of persons and things, but are at the same time written with such power to wound, that I could not publish them even now, but must either destroy them or preserve them for posterity as striking records of our hidden literary dissensions. With all this, the fact that in all his writings he worked negatively and destructively, was distasteful to himself, and he often declared that he envied me that innocent love of objective treatment which arose from the pleasure I took both in the original object and its artistic representation.

For the rest, his literary dilettantism would have been rather useful than injurious to him, if he had not felt an irresistible impulse to enter also on a technical and mercantile career. For when once he began to curse his faculties, and to be beside himself, because his genius failed to satisfy the demands of his creative talent, he would give up both plastic art and poetry, to think of mercantile and manufacturing undertakings, which were to bring in money while they afforded him amusement.

In Darmstadt there was besides a society of very cultivated men. Privy Councillor von Hesse, Minister of the Landgrave, Professor Petersen, Rector Wenck, and others, were the native residents whose worth attracted in turn many more from neighbouring parts of the country, and many

travellers passing through the city. The wife of the privy councillor and her sister, Demoiselle Flachsland, were both ladies of unusual merit and talents; the latter, who was betrothed to Herder, being doubly interesting from her own qualities and her attachment to so great a man.

It would be impossible to tell how much my intercourse with such a circle helped to invigorate and widen my powers. They liked me to read aloud my completed or unfinished works; they encouraged me, when I freely gave them details of my plans, and blamed me when at every opportunity I laid aside what I had already commenced. *Faust* had already advanced some way; *Götz von Berlichingen* was gradually framing itself in my mind; the study of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries occupied much of my time; and the cathedral had left a deep impression on me, which might well form a background to such poetical projects.

All I had thought and imagined with respect to that style of architecture, I now wrote in connected form. The first point on which I insisted was, that it should be called German, and not Gothic; that it should not be considered foreign, but native. The second point was, that it could not be compared with the architecture of the Greeks and Romans, because it sprang from an entirely different principle. If the latter, living under a more favourable sky, allowed their roof to rest upon columns, the natural consequence was a broken wall-surface. We, however, who are obliged always to protect ourselves against the weather and surround ourselves with walls, must revere the genius which discovered the means of endowing massive walls with variety, of creating an illusion of apertures in them, and of thus bringing the eye to rest with justifiable delight on a broad, bold surface. The same principle applied to the steeples, not intended, like cupolas, to form a heaven within, but to strive towards heaven without, and to announce to the country far and wide the existence of the sanctuary which lies at their base. I only ventured to touch on the interiors of these venerable buildings by a few observations born of poetical enthusiasm and devout reverence.

If I had been satisfied with writing down these views,

whose value I will not deny, clearly and distinctly, in an intelligible style, then my paper "On German Architecture, I: M: Ervini a Steinbach," would, when published, have produced more effect, and would have earlier attracted the attention of the lovers of art in our country. But, misled by the example of Herder and Hamann, I obscured these very simple thoughts and observations by a cloud of words and phrases, and so, both for myself and others, darkened the light which had dawned upon me. However, the paper was well received, and reprinted in Herder's pamphlet on German character and art (*Von Deutscher Art und Kunst*).

But though now, partly from inclination, partly for literary and other purposes, I eagerly studied the antiquities of my country, and tried to render them present to my imagination, I was from time to time distracted from this subject by biblical studies and religious sympathies, since Luther's life and deeds, which shine out so gloriously in the sixteenth century, always brought me back to the Holy Scriptures, and to the consideration of religious feelings and opinions. To look upon the Bible as a compilation, dating from various periods, and having undergone revision at different times, was flattering to my small-minded vanity, since this view was then by no means predominant, much less received in the circle in which I lived. With regard to the main interpretation, I adhered to Luther's rendering; in matters of detail, I referred to Schmidt's literal translation, and made the best use I could of my smattering of Hebrew. That there are contradictions in the Bible, no one will now deny. These interpreters sought to reconcile by laying down the clearest passage as a foundation, and endeavouring to conform to its meaning those that were contradictory and less clear. I, on the contrary, wished to find out, by examination, which passage best expressed the real sense. To this I adhered, and rejected the rest as interpolated.

For a fundamental opinion had already formed definitely in my mind, without my being able to say whether it had been suggested, or inspired, or had arisen from my own reflection. It was this,—that in anything which is handed down to us, especially in writing, the real point is the groundwork, the inner meaning, the sense, the tendency of the

work; that here lies all that makes it original, divine, effective, unassailable and indestructible; and that neither time, nor outward influences or vicissitudes, can in any degree affect this inner primitive nature, at least no more than sickness of the body affects a healthy soul. Thus, according to my view, the language, the dialect, the characteristics, the style, and finally the writing, were to be regarded as the mere body of every creation of the mind; this body, although nearly akin to the inner spirit, was yet exposed to deterioration and corruption; as, indeed, no tradition can be handed down in its original purity; nor, indeed, if so delivered, could it be perfectly intelligible in every succeeding epoch,—the former on account of the imperfection of those organs through which the tradition is delivered,—the latter on account of the differences of time and place, but especially the diversity of human capacities and modes of thought; for which reason the interpreters will never be able to agree.

Hence it is everyone's duty to try to discover the inner, essential nature of a book which particularly interests us, and at the same time, above all things, to consider in what relation it stands to our own inner nature, and how far, by its vitality, our own is stirred and rendered fruitful. On the other hand, everything external that exercises no influence on us, or is subject to doubt, is to be handed over to criticism, which, even if able to disintegrate and dismember the whole, would never succeed in depriving us of the essential foundation to which we cling, nor even in shaking us for a moment in the confidence we have once felt.

This conviction, born of faith and sight, which is applicable and strengthening in all those cases which we recognize as most vital, underlay the moral as well as the literary structure of my life, and may be regarded as a well-invested and richly productive capital, although in particular instances we may be led astray into making erroneous applications. It was by such an attitude of mind that the Bible first became really accessible to me. As is usually the case in a Protestant up-bringing, I had run through it many times, and by reading separate portions here and there I was perfectly familiar with it from beginning to end. The blunt realism of the Old Testament, and the tender simplicity of

the New, had attracted me in many parts; it is true it never presented itself to me as a whole; but now the diversity of character of the different books no longer perplexed me; I knew how to grasp their significance correctly and in due order, and had expended too much feeling upon the book to be ever able to do without it. This emotional aspect was of itself sufficient to protect me against scoffing spirits, because I saw their dishonesty at once. I not only detested them, but they even prompted me to rage; and I still perfectly remember that in my childish fanatical zeal I could have throttled Voltaire, for his *Saul*, if I could only have got at him. On the other hand, every kind of honest investigation pleased me; I was delighted to gather any information as to the localities and costumes of the East, and so to gain more light on these subjects, and I continued to exercise all my powers of discrimination in the study of such valuable traditions.

My reader is already aware how at an earlier period I tried to initiate myself in the primeval conditions of the world, as described in the first book of Moses. With the intention of proceeding correctly in due order, after a long interruption, I took up the second book. But what a difference! Just as the exuberance of childhood had vanished from my life, so I found the second book separated from the first by a monstrous chasm. Utter forgetfulness of bygone times finds expression in those few significant words, "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." But the people also, innumerable as the stars of heaven, had almost forgotten the ancestor to whom, under the starry heaven, Jehovah had made the very promise which was now fulfilled. I worked through the five books with unspeakable pains and with insufficient aids and equipment, and in so doing developed the strangest ideas. I thought I had discovered that it was not our ten commandments which stood upon the tables of the law; that the Israelites did not wander through the desert for forty years, but only for a short space of time; and moreover fancied I could give entirely new revelations on the character of Moses.

Even the New Testament was not safe from my investigations; with my passion for analysis I did not spare it, but

my affection and inclination led me to agree with the wise saying, "The evangelists may contradict each other, if only the gospel does not contradict itself." In this region too I believed I had made all sorts of discoveries. That gift of tongues imparted at Pentecost with such splendour and vividness was interpreted by me in a somewhat abstruse manner, and one not adapted to win many adherents.

I did my best to accept one of the chief Lutheran doctrines, which has been still more emphasized by the Moravians,—namely, that of regarding sin as predominant in man,—but without remarkable success. Nevertheless I had acquired some proficiency in the phraseology of this doctrine, and made use of it in a letter, which, in the character of a country pastor, I now pretended to write to a new clerical brother. But the chief theme in the paper was that watch-word of the time, known as "Toleration," which then prevailed among more thoughtful and intelligent men.

Such casual productions I had printed at my own cost in the ensuing year, to test my position with the public, then made presents of them, or sent them to Eichenberg's shop, for him to dispose of as fast as possible, without deriving any profit from them myself. Here and there a review mentioned them, one favourably, another unfavourably,—but they were soon forgotten. My father kept them carefully in his archives, otherwise I should not have a copy of them. It is my intention to add these, as well as some other unpublished writings of the kind which I have found, to the new edition of my works.

Since I had really been seduced into this sybilline style of writing, as well as into the publication of such papers, by Hamann, this seems the fitting place to make mention of this great and influential man, who was then as great a mystery to us as he has always remained to his native country. His work, *Socratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (Socratic Memorabilia), was talked about and was especially liked by those who could not adapt themselves to the dazzling spirit of the time. In him they divined a learned and profound thinker, who, though accurately acquainted with public life and with literature, yet allowed a place in his philosophy to the mysterious and the unfathomable, and

spoke of them in a manner peculiarly his own. By those who then ruled the literature of the day, he was indeed considered an abstruse fanatic, but our aspiring youth was irresistibly drawn to him. Even the "Quiet-in-the-land," as they were called, half in jest, half in earnest,—those pious souls, who, without professing themselves members of any society, formed an invisible church—were attracted to him; while to my friend Fräulein von Klettenberg, and no less to her friend Moser, this "Magus of the North" was an object of warm regard. The general desire to come in contact with him was strengthened by the knowledge that though tormented by straitened domestic circumstances, he nevertheless was able to persevere in his noble and lofty views of life. President von Moser's powerful influence should have easily availed to ensure a tolerable and comfortable existence for such a frugal man. The matter was set on foot, and had even reached a stage of such good mutual understanding that Hamann undertook the long journey from Königsberg to Darmstadt. But as the President happened to be absent, that eccentric man returned at once, no one knows why, though a friendly correspondence was kept up between them. I still possess two letters from Hamann to his patron, which bear testimony to the wonderful nobility and sincerity of their author.

But so good an understanding was not to last long. Devout minds had looked upon him as being devout after their own pattern; they had treated him with reverence as the "Magus of the North," and thought that he would continue to present the same reverent demeanour to the world. Already in the *Wolken* (Clouds), an epilogue to *Socratic Memorabilia*, he had given offence to some. He now published the *Kreuzzüge des Philologen* (Crusades of a Philologist), on the title-page of which appeared not only the goat-profile of a horned Pan, but also on one of the first pages, a huge wooden cock, beating time to some young cockerels, who stood before him with notes in their claws, presenting a ridiculous appearance, by which the author intended to make fun of certain church music, of which he did not approve. Immediately there arose among well-meaning and sensitive people a dissatisfaction, which they did not conceal from the author, who, resenting it in his turn,

shunned a closer intimacy. Our interest in this man was, however, always kept alive by Herder, who, in the correspondence which he kept up with us and with his betrothed, informed us at once of every production of his extraordinary genius. Amongst these were his criticisms and notices, inserted in the *Königsberg Zeitung*, all of which bore the stamp of a singular mind. I am in possession of an almost complete collection of his works, and of a very important essay on Herder's prize treatise on the origin of language, in which he throws flashes of light upon this specimen of Herder's work in the most characteristic manner.

I still entertain the hope of myself superintending, or at least furthering, an edition of Hamann's works; and then, when these documents are again before the public, it will be time to speak more fully of the author, his nature and character. In the meanwhile, however, I will here adduce a few remarks upon him, especially as eminent men are still living who had a great regard for him, and whose approval or correction would be very welcome to me. The main principle to which all Hamann's statements may be referred is the following: "All that man undertakes to perform, whether by deed, by word, or otherwise, must proceed from the union of all his powers; everything isolated is worthless." A noble maxim, but hard to follow. To life and art it may indeed be applied, but its application to any verbal statement, that is not purely of a poetical nature, is open to grave objection; for speech must be abstracted from the speaker, must isolate itself, to say or signify anything. The speaker himself must, for the moment, express one side of himself only; there can be no communication, no imparting of knowledge without abstraction. Now Hamann, once for all, opposed this separation, and felt, imagined, and thought in unity, and more than that chose to speak in unity, and to require others to do the same. Hence he came into conflict with his own style, and with all the productions of others. To accomplish the impossible, he grasps at every possible ingredient; the deepest and most recondite conceptions in which nature and mind mysteriously meet—illuminating flashes of understanding, which are struck forth from such a contact—significant images, floating in these regions—forcible aphorisms from sacred and secular writers—with the

addition of occasional touches of humour—these all make up the wondrous aggregate of his style and writings. Now, if we cannot associate ourselves with him in his depths —cannot wander with him on his heights—cannot master the forms which float before him—cannot, from the wide fields of literature, find out the exact sense of a passage which is only hinted at—then we find that the more we study him, the more obscure and dark he grows to us; and this obscurity must of necessity increase with years, because his allusions were directed to certain definite peculiarities which prevailed, for the moment, in life and in literature. In my collection there are some of his printed sheets, where he has cited with his own hand, in the margin, the passages to which he alludes. If we look them up it is only to find a sort of equivocal light, which is highly pleasing, but which compels us to renounce what is generally meant by understanding. Such papers deserve to be called sybilline, for the reason that one cannot consider them in and for themselves, but must wait for an opportunity of seeking refuge with their oracles. Every time we open them we fancy we have found something new, because the sense which lies in every passage touches and excites us in many various ways.

Personally I never saw him; nor had I any direct intercourse with him by means of letters. It seems to me that he was extremely clear in his grasp of the relationships of life and friendship, and that he had a very just estimate of the mutual relations of persons to each other, and to himself. All the letters of his which I have seen are excellent, and much clearer than his works, because here the references to time, circumstances, and personal affairs were far more evident. I thought, however, that I could discern this general trait in them, that, feeling the superiority of his mental gifts in the most *naïve* manner, he always considered himself rather wiser and shrewder than his correspondents, whom he treated on the whole with more irony than warmth. Even if this was only the case in single instances, it was at any rate true in the majority of cases which fell under my notice, and was the reason why I never felt any desire to approach him.

On the other hand, Herder maintained a lively and

kindly literary correspondence with us, though it was a pity that it could never be continued in peace and calm. Herder never left off his teasing and scolding ways; and a very little of them was sufficient to irritate Merck, who in his turn contrived to excite me to impatience. Then, because Herder seemed to honour Swift above all other authors and men, he was known among us as the "Dean," and this again gave rise to various misunderstandings and annoyances.

Nevertheless we were highly delighted to learn that he was to have an appointment at Bückeburg, which would bring him double honour, since his new patron had a great reputation as a clear-headed and brave, though eccentric man. Thomas Abbt had become well known and famous in his service; his country still mourned his death, and was pleased with the monument which his patron had erected for him. Now Herder was to follow in the steps of the deceased, and to fulfil all those hopes which his predecessor had so worthily excited, and which had been shattered by his untimely end.

The period in which this happened gave a double lustre and value to such an appointment; for several German princes soon followed the example of the Count of Lippe, and took into their service not merely learned men, and men properly fitted for their office, but also men of talent and promise. Thus, it was said, Klopstock had been invited by the Margrave Charles of Baden, not for real official service, but that by his presence he might grace the higher circles of society and be of use to them. And just as the regard felt for this noble prince, who gave his attention to all that was useful and beautiful, increased in consequence, so also veneration for Klopstock was not a little heightened. All his productions were highly and dearly valued; and we carefully copied his odes and elegies whenever we could get them. We were therefore highly delighted when the great Landgravine Caroline of Hesse-Darmstadt made a collection of them, and we obtained possession of one of the few copies, and were thus able to complete our own manuscript collection. That is why those original readings long remained most in favour with us; we have even often refreshed and delighted ourselves with

poems which the author afterwards rejected. So true it is, that the life which streams from a great mind is untrammelled in proportion as it escapes being drawn by criticism into the field of technical art.

Klopstock, by his character and conduct, had won esteem and honour, both for himself and for other men of talent; now they were, if possible, to be further indebted to him for the safe-guarding and improvement of their domestic circumstances. For the book-trade, up to that date, had dealt chiefly with important scientific books,—with stock-works, for which a moderate remuneration was paid. But the production of poetry was looked upon as something sacred; and in this case any acceptance or increase of remuneration would have been regarded almost as simony. Authors and publishers stood in the strangest relation to one another. Both, according to the point of view, might be considered as patrons and clients. The authors, who, irrespective of their talent, were generally respected and revered by the public as highly moral men, acquired an intellectual status, and felt themselves rewarded by the success of their labours; the publishers were well satisfied with the second place, and enjoyed a considerable profit. But, on the other hand, his opulence placed the wealthy bookseller above the impecunious poet, and thus a most satisfactory balance was maintained. Generosity and gratitude were not infrequent on either side. Breitkopf and Gottsched lived, all their lives, as inmates of the same house. Stinginess and baseness, especially that of piracy, were not yet in vogue.

Nevertheless a general feeling of dissatisfaction had arisen among German authors. They compared their own very moderate, not to say needy circumstances, with the wealth of the eminent booksellers; they considered how great was the fame of a Gellert, of a Rabener, and under what pecuniary difficulties a German poet of universal fame must struggle, if he did not try to lessen the burden of life by some other calling. Even the mediocre and lesser talents felt a strong desire to see their condition improved, —to make themselves independent of the publishers.

Now Klopstock came forward and offered his "Republic of Letters" (*Gelehrten-Republik*) for subscription. Although the latter cantos of the *Messiah*, partly on account of their

subject, partly on account of the treatment, could not produce the same effect as the earlier ones, which, pure and innocent in themselves, fell upon pure and innocent times; still the public continued to feel the same esteem for the poet, who, by the publication of his odes, had won the hearts, minds, and feelings of many. A large number of his admirers, among whom were several men of great influence, became subscribers before the publication of the book. The price was a *louis d'or*, the object being, it was said, not so much to pay for the book, as on this occasion to reward the author for his services to his country. Now every one came eagerly to the front; even youths and young girls, who had not much to expend, opened their savings-boxes; men and women, the higher and the middle classes, all contributed to this devout offering; and perhaps as many as a thousand subscribers, all paying in advance, were collected. Expectation was raised to the highest pitch, and accompanied by absolute confidence.

After all this, the work, on its appearance, was doomed to the strangest reception conceivable; it was, indeed, of undoubted value, but by no means of universal interest. Klopstock's thoughts on poetry and literature were set forth in the form of an old German Druidic republic; his maxims on true and false art were expressed in laconic aphorisms, in which, however, much that was instructive was sacrificed to the singularity of the form. For authors and men of letters, the book was and is invaluable; but it was only for such readers that it could be useful and fruitful of result. He who had thought himself, could follow the thinker; he who knew how to seek and prize what was genuine, could find instruction in the earnest sincerity of the writer; but the amateur, the general reader, was not enlightened,—to him the book remained sealed; and yet it had been placed in all hands; and while everyone expected a thoroughly useful book, most of them obtained one which was absolutely without meaning to them. The dismay was general, but so great was the esteem in which the man was held, that no grumbling, scarcely a murmur, arose. The young and gay got over their loss, and jestingly gave away the copies they had so dearly purchased. I received several from kind lady friends, but have none of them by me now.

This undertaking, successful for the author, but a failure for the public, had the unfortunate consequence of banishing for the moment any further thought of subscriptions in advance; yet the desire had been too general for the attempt not to be renewed. The Dessau publishing-house now offered to do this on a large scale. According to their plan authors and publishers, in close alliance, were to enjoy each their own share of the anticipated advantages. This attempt to meet a long-felt want was again welcomed with confidence; but this could not last long; and after a brief endeavour the parties separated, with loss on both sides.

However, a means of rapid communication among lovers of literature had been already introduced. The *Musenalmanache** linked all young poets to one another; the journals linked the poet to other authors. My own pleasure in production was boundless; to what I had produced I was indifferent; but when, in the society of appreciative friends, I recalled what I had written to myself and others, my delight in it was renewed. Moreover, many took an interest both in my longer and shorter works, because I always urged everyone who felt in any degree inclined to write and fitted for it, to produce something independently, in his own vein, and was, in my turn, continually incited by everyone to fresh compositions in prose and verse. This mutual spurring and egging on to effort, even carried to an extreme as it was, gave everyone a happy influence of his own; and from this whirl of creative energy, this living and letting live, this give and take, carried on by so many youths of their own free impulse, without any guiding-star of theory, each in accordance with his own unhampered individuality, arose that extolled and decried, yet far-famed epoch in literature, in which a number of young and gifted men, with all the audacity and presumption peculiar to their own youthful age, produced, by the exercise of their powers, much pleasure and much good, and by the abuse of them, much suffering and harm. It is the action and reaction of forces springing from this source, that form the chief theme of this present volume.

In what can young people take the highest interest, and how are they to excite interest among those of their own

* Annual publications devoted to poetry only.—*Trans.*

age, if they are not animated by love, are not stirred by the vicissitudes of passion under one form or another? I mourned in secret for a lost love; this made me mild and tolerant, and a more pleasant member of society than in those bright days when nothing reminded me of any deficiency or fault, and I sped recklessly on my way, heedless of all restraints.

My heart was torn by Frederica's answer to my written farewell. It was the same hand, the same thought, the same feeling, which had developed in her for me and through me. Now, for the first time, I felt the loss which she suffered, and saw no means of compensating her for it, or even of alleviating the pain. She was ever present with me; I always felt the lack of her, and, what was worst of all, I could not forgive myself for my own unhappiness. Gretchen had been taken from me; Annette had left me; now, for the first time, I was to blame, I had wounded the loveliest heart to its very depths; and this period of gloomy repentance, in the absence of that refreshing love which I had been wont to enjoy, was agonizing, nay, unbearable. Put man must live; hence I took a genuine interest in others; I sought to unravel their difficulties, and to keep together those who were about to part, that they might not have to suffer the same lot as myself. I was known, in consequence, as the "confidant," or, because of my wanderings about the district, as the "wanderer." The situation of Frankfort was well adapted to give me that calm of mind, which I only felt under the open sky, in valleys, on heights, in fields and in woods, lying as it did between Darmstadt and Homburg, two pleasant townships, which were on good terms with one another on account of the relationship existing between their courts. I accustomed myself to live on the road, and to wander like a messenger between the mountains and the plain. I often went through my native city, alone or in company, as if it were strange to me, dined at one of the great inns in the *Fahrgasse*, and after dinner continued my way. The free and open world of nature attracted me more and more. On my way I would sing to myself strange hymns and dithyrambs, of which one entitled "The Wanderer's Storm Song" (*Wanderers Sturmlied*) is still preserved. I composed those incoherent verses, and

sang them passionately to myself once when I found myself in a terrific storm which I was obliged to meet.

My heart was untouched and empty; I conscientiously avoided all intimacy with ladies, and so remained unconscious of the fact, that, heedless and unconscious as I was, a good and friendly genius was in secret hovering round me. A gentle loveable woman cherished a secret affection for me, of which I was ignorant, and was therefore all the more cheerful and animated in her kindly presence. Many years afterwards, when she was dead, I heard of her secret and devoted love, in a manner that could not fail to shock me. But I was innocent, and could truly and honestly pity an innocent being; and that all the more sincerely, as the discovery occurred at a time when, free from all passion, I was fortunate enough to be living for myself and my intellectual tastes.

At the time when I was troubled by my grief at Frederica's sad position, I again, as had ever been my wont, sought the aid of poetry. I continued that confession in verse which I had already begun, so that by this self-tormenting penance I might be worthy of inner absolution. The two Marys in *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Clavigo*, and the two bad characters who play the part of lovers to them, may have been the results of such penitent reflections.

But as youth easily recovers from injuries and diseases, because a healthy system of organic life can take the place of a sick one, and allow the latter time to grow healthy again, so now physical exercises came to my help most advantageously at different times; and I was stirred in many ways to pluck up heart again, and to seek new pleasures and enjoyments in life. Riding gradually took the place of those strolling, melancholy, toilsome, as well as tedious and aimless rambles on foot; for in this way the goal was reached more quickly, merrily, and easily. My younger companions reintroduced fencing, but it was especially when winter set in that a new world was revealed to us. I suddenly determined to skate,—an exercise which I had never attempted,—and, in a short time, by practice, thought, and perseverance, got on well enough to enjoy mingling with the gay and animated crowd on the ice, with no wish to distinguish myself further.

And we owed the joy of this new recreation to Klopstock

also,—to his enthusiasm for this glorious form of exercise, which private accounts confirmed, while his odes gave undeniable evidence of it. I still remember clearly how on a bright frosty morning I sprang out of bed, reciting these passages aloud—

> "Already, glad with the feeling of health,
> Far down along the shore, I have whiten'd
> The covering crystal. . . .
> How does the winter's on-coming day
> Softly illumine the lake! The night has cast
> The glittering frost, star-like, upon it."

My hesitating and wavering resolution was at once fixed, and I flew straight to the place which I thought best suited for the first attempts of so old a beginner. And, indeed, this vent for our energies well deserves to be commended by Klopstock, for it is an exercise which puts us in contact with the fresh spirits of childhood, summons youth to the full enjoyment of its suppleness, and is fitted to ward off a stagnant old age. We became immoderately devoted to this pastime. We were not satisfied with spending the whole of a glorious Sunday in this way on the ice, but continued our skating till late at night. For while other forms of exertion fatigue the body, this one gives it a constantly renewed power. The full moon rising from the clouds, over the dark, wide meadows, frozen to fields of ice; the night-breeze rustling towards us on our course; the deep rumbling of the ice sinking with the lessening of the water; the strange echo of our own movements, called scenes from Ossian vividly to our minds. First one friend, then another recited an ode of Klopstock's, in a kind of measured chant; and if we were together in the twilight, the unfeigned praise of the author of our joys would then break forth—

> "And should he not be immortal,
> Who found for us health and joys
> Which the horse, though bold in his course, never gave,
> And which even the dance knows not?"

Such is the gratitude deserved by him who by the charm of his thought is able to ennoble any human activity and give it the popularity it merits.

And thus, just as talented children, whose mental gifts

have early been developed to an extraordinary degree, return, when allowed, to the simplest childish games, so we, too, only too easily forgot our calling to more serious things. Nevertheless, this very exercise, so often carried on in solitude—this delightful movement through undetermined space—excited again many of my inner cravings, which had for a time lain dormant; and I have been indebted to such hours for a more speedy elaboration of former plans.

The darker ages of German history had always excited my curiosity and my imagination. The thought of dramatizing *Götz von Berlichingen*, with all the local colouring of the times in which he lived, was one which particularly attracted me. I had industriously read the chief authors on the subject, had devoted all my attention to Datt's work, *De Pace Publica*, had sedulously worked through it, and had tried to get as clear and detailed a view as possible of all those wonderful events. These studies, originally undertaken for ethic and literary purposes, now proved of further use to me, as I found on a visit I made to Wetzlar, where my historical preparation stood me in good stead. For the Imperial Chamber had arisen in consequence of the public peace, and its history served as an important clue to the confused events of German history. Indeed, the constitution of courts and armies gives the most accurate insight into the constitution of every empire. Even finance, the influence of which is considered so important, is less essential; for if the whole is in want, it is only necessary to take from the individual what he has laboriously collected, and so the state is always sufficiently rich.

What happened to me in Wetzlar is of no great importance, but greater interest may be derived, if the reader will not disdain a cursory account of the history of the Imperial Chamber, so as to be able to imagine the unfavourable moment at which I arrived there.

The lords of the earth are such, principally because they can gather around them, in war, the bravest and most resolute, and in peace, the wisest and the justest of the land. And so the princely household of a German emperor possessed a court of this kind, which always accompanied him in his expeditions through the empire. But neither this precaution, nor the Suabian law, which prevailed in the south of

Germany, nor the Saxon law, which prevailed in the north, —neither the judges appointed to maintain them, nor the decisions of the peers of the contending parties,—neither the umpires recognized by agreement, nor the reconciliations instituted by the clergy,—nothing, in short, could quiet the restless love of feud in the chivalrous spirits of the day which had been roused and fostered among the Germans, by internal discord, by foreign campaigns, by the crusades especially, and even by judicial usages, till it had become the order of the day. To the emperor, as well as to the powerful estates, these petty quarrels were extremely annoying, for by their means the less powerful became troublesome to one another, and if they combined, a danger to the great as well. All power of external action was paralyzed, and all internal order was destroyed; and besides this, a great part of the country was still weighed down by the *Vehmgericht*, of the horrors of which we can form some idea if we realize that it degenerated into a secret police, and that at last, its power even fell into the hands of private individuals.

Many attempts had been made in vain to check these evils, until, at last, the estates urgently advocated a court formed from among themselves. This proposal, though well-meant, pointed, nevertheless, to an extension of the privileges of the estates, and a limitation of the imperial power. Under Frederick III. the matter was shelved; his son Maximilian, under external pressure, complied. He appointed the chief judge, while the estates sent the assessors. There were to be four-and-twenty of them; but, at first, twelve were thought sufficient.

Always, and from the first, the Imperial Chamber suffered from a fundamental defect which is common to the general run of human undertakings: insufficient means were applied to a great end. The number of the assessors was too small. How was so difficult and extensive a problem to be solved by them? But who was to insist on an efficient provision? The emperor could not favour an institution which seemed to work more against him than for him; he had far more reason to complete the constitution of his own council and his own court. If, on the other hand, we consider the interests of the estates, all that properly

concerned them was to put an end to bloodshed. Whether the wound was healed, was of secondary importance : and then, besides, there was to be an increase of expense. It may not have been exactly realized from the first that such an institution involved an increase in the retinue of every prince, for a definite end it is true,—but who cares to spend money on what is necessary? Everyone would be well pleased if he could get the necessaries of life for the asking.

At first it was arranged that the assessors were to live on their fees; then followed a moderate grant from the estates; both were insufficient. But willing, able, and industrious men were found ready to meet this great and obvious emergency, and the court was established. Whether anyone was aware that this was merely an alleviation and not a cure for the evil, or whether, as in similar cases, the flattering hope was entertained that much could be done with little means, it is impossible to say. What is certain is that the court served rather as a pretext to punish the troublers of the peace, than as a thorough preventive of the evil. But no sooner had it met than it evolved an unlooked-for power; it felt the eminence of its position; it recognized its own great political importance. It now endeavoured by a marvellous activity to win a more definite authority. It at once took in hand all matters requiring or allowing of instant despatch, all questions that could be easily judged and decided on the spot; and so produced throughout the empire an impression of efficiency and weight. On the other hand, matters of weightier import, lawsuits, properly so called, were left at a standstill, and this was no misfortune. The only concern of the state is, that possession shall be certain and secure; whether it is also legal, is of less consequence. Hence, the empire felt little harm from the monstrous and ever-increasing number of delayed lawsuits. For those who used violence, provision was already made, and with them matters could be settled; but those, on the other hand, who went to law about possession, lived, throve, or starved, as they could; they died, were ruined, or were reconciled; but all this only concerned the weal or woe of individual families,—the empire was gradually tranquillized. For the Imperial Chamber was endowed

with a legal right to use force against the disobedient; had it been able to hurl the bolt of excommunication, this would have been more effective still.

But now, what with the sometimes increasing, sometimes diminishing number of assessors, what with countless interruptions, what with the removal of the court from one place to another, these arrears, these documents necessarily increased to an infinite extent. At one time, during the troubles of the war, part of the archives was sent for safety from Spire to Aschaffenburg, part to Worms, the third fell into the hands of the French, who thought they had got possession of the state-archives, but would afterwards have been glad to get rid of this chaos of papers, if anyone would but have supplied any means of transit.

During the negotiations for the peace of Westphalia, the good sense of the assembled delegates showed them clearly enough what sort of a lever was required to move from its place a load equal to that of Sisyphus. Fifty assessors were now to be appointed, but the number was never made up: they again made shift with half as many, because of the expense; but if the parties interested had all understood their own advantage in the matter, they would gladly have afforded the whole. The salary of five-and-twenty assessors would have amounted to about one hundred thousand florins, and how easily could twice that amount have been raised in Germany? The proposal to endow the Imperial Chamber with confiscated church property could never be passed, for how could the two religious parties agree to such a sacrifice? The Catholics were unwilling to lose yet more, and the Protestants wished to employ what they had gained, each for his own private ends. The division of the empire into two religious parties here again was of most pernicious consequence in various ways. The interest which the estates took in this court of theirs henceforth diminished more and more; the more powerful tried to withdraw from the confederation; charters conferring exemption from prosecution before any higher tribunal were sought more and more eagerly; the more influential withheld their payments, while the lower orders, who, moreover, thought themselves wronged in the estimates, delayed as long as they could.

Such were the difficulties felt in raising the necessary

supplies for the payment of salaries. And this gave rise to new work and to fresh loss of time for the chamber; hitherto this had been the work of the so-called annual "visitations." Princes in person, or their councillors, went for a few months or weeks only to the court, examined the state of the treasury, investigated the arrears, and undertook to get them in. At the same time, if there was any danger threatening to impede the course of law or the work of the court, or any abuse likely to creep in, they were authorized to provide a remedy. It was their business to discover and remove the faults of the institution as a whole, but it was not till later that the investigation and punishment of the personal crimes of its members became a part of their duty. But because parties in litigation always like to protract their hopes to the last possible moment, and therefore are always ready to appeal to higher authorities, these visitors gradually became a court of appeal, to which litigants at first only looked for restitution in definite and evident cases, but which at last became a mere excuse for delay and procrastination; and this state of things was still further encouraged by the right of appeal to the Imperial Diet, and by the endeavour of the two religious parties, if not to efface each other, at any rate to preserve a balance of power.

But if one considers what this court might have been without such obstacles, without such disturbing and destructive influence, it is impossible to overestimate its weight and importance. Had it been supplied at the beginning with a sufficient number of members, and had these been adequately supported, the immense influence which this body might have attained, considering the aptitude of the Germans, is incalculable. They would then have richly deserved that honourable title of "Amphictyons," which was bestowed on them as a mere flower of rhetoric; nay, more, they might have raised themselves into an intermediate power, an honour both to its head and its members.

But far from attaining any such power, the court, excepting for a short time under Charles V., and before the Thirty Years' War, dragged on a feeble existence. It is difficult to understand how men could be found to undertake such a thankless and melancholy task. But a man will put up with

his daily occupation, if he has any talent for it, even if he does not see that anything will come of it. The German especially is of this persevering turn of mind, and thus for three hundred years the best men of the nation have expended their energies in labours of this kind. A portrait gallery of such characters would even now excite interest and inspire courage.

For it is just in such anarchical times that the able man makes himself most felt, and the man of noble aims is in his right place. Thus, for instance, the period when Fürstenberg was in office was still held in blessed memory, and the death of this great man was the signal for the irruption of many pernicious abuses.

But all these earlier and later defects arose from one original source, the small number of members. It was decreed that the assessors were to act in a fixed order, and by definite arrangement. Each one could know beforehand when his turn would come, and what cases would be placed before him; he could therefore work them up and prepare himself. But now innumerable arrears had accumulated to such an extent that they were forced to select the more important cases, and to deal with them out of order. But in a pressure of important business, the decision as to the relative importance of various cases is difficult, and selection gives scope to favouritism. Now, another critical case occurred. The reporter had been wearying both himself and the court with a difficult involved case so long that at last no one was found willing to take up the judgment. The contending parties had come to an agreement, had separated, had died, or changed their minds. Hence the judges resolved to take up only those matters which were brought before their notice. Their object was to be convinced of the continued determination of the litigants, and thus they laid themselves open to the gravest abuses, for he who commends his cause, must commend it to somebody, and to whom can he commend it better, than to him who has it to decide? To conceal the identity of the latter, as was strictly legal, was impossible; for how could this be done with so many subordinates, all equally behind the scenes? Now to beg for despatch is all but equivalent to soliciting a favour, for is not the very fact of pressing on the action a

proof that it is considered just? This may not perhaps be done directly, certainly it will be first done through subordinates; these must be won over, and thus scope is given to intrigue and bribery of all sorts.

The Emperor Joseph, following his own impulse, and in imitation of Frederick, first turned his attention to the army and to the administration of justice. And first he examined the Imperial Chamber. He was well aware of the existence of traditional wrongs, and of the creeping in of abuses. Here too there was a call for vigorous and stirring action. Without asking whether it was to his advantage as emperor, without foreseeing the possibility of a fortunate issue, he proposed a revival of the "visitation," and hastened on its opening. For one hundred and sixty years no regular visitation had taken place; a monstrous chaos of papers had accumulated and was increasing from year to year, since the seventeen assessors were insufficient even for the despatch of current business. Twenty thousand lawsuits had accumulated; sixty could be settled every year, and double that number were brought forward. Furthermore, there was no small number of revisions awaiting the visitors,—they were estimated at fifty thousand. Many other abuses, in addition to this, hindered the course of justice; but the most serious matter of all was the personal delinquency of some assessors, which loomed in the background.

When I was about to visit Wetzlar, the visitation had been already for some years in operation, the parties accused had been suspended from office, the investigation had been pushed on considerably; and because the doctors and professors of German constitutional law could not let this opportunity pass of showing their wisdom and of devoting it to the common weal, several profound and thoughtful works had appeared, from which everyone, with any previous knowledge, could derive valuable information. When in the course of their exposition they went back to the constitution of the empire and the books written upon it, it was most surprising that the frightful condition of this thoroughly diseased body, which was only kept alive by miracle, was the very thing that most delighted the learned. For that venerable industrious German zeal, which preferred the collection and development of details to the study of

results, found here inexhaustible material for new employment, and whether it was the empire in opposition to the emperor, or the lesser to the greater estates, or the Catholics to the Protestants, there always necessarily arose a variety of opinion from a variety of interest, and always therefore fresh occasion for contests and controversies.

Since I had done my best to realize all these circumstances, both old and new, it was impossible for me to hope for much pleasure from my stay in Wetzlar. The prospect was not attractive of finding in a city, which was well situated, but small and ill-built, a kind of twofold world: first the old native, traditional world, then a new and foreign one, authorized to scrutinize the other with severity; two tribunals, one of the judged, the other of the judges; many an inhabitant in fear and anxiety, lest he, too, should be drawn into the impending investigation; persons in authority, long held in respect, convicted of the most scandalous misdeeds, and marked out for disgraceful punishment;—all this made the most dismal picture, and could not lure me to plunge more deeply into a pursuit, which, already involved in itself, seemed to be still further complicated by wrong-doing.

It was in the certain expectation of finding here no scientific interests save those of civil and constitutional law, and no literary intercourse whatever, that, after some hesitation and rather from a desire for change than from any intellectual craving, I at length decided to visit this town. How great then was my surprise, when, instead of a crabbed and soured society, I was received into an academic life for the third time. At a large *table d'hôte* I found a number of lively youths, nearly all subordinate officials of the commissions; they gave me a friendly welcome, and the very first day they made no secret of the fact that they had cheered their midday-gatherings by indulging in a romantic fiction. This consisted in representing a table of knights with much spirit and merriment. At the head sat the grand-master, by his side the chancellor, then the most important officers of state; next followed the knights, according to seniority. Strangers, on the other hand, who joined them, were forced to be content with the lowest places, and to these the conversation was almost unintelligible, because the language of

the society, in addition to chivalric expressions, was enriched by many allusions. Everyone had a name and a suitable epithet assigned to him. Mine were, "Götz von Berlichingen, the true-hearted." The former I earned by my love for the gallant German patriarch, the latter by my genuine affection and devotion for the eminent men with whom I became acquainted. I owed much to the Count von Kielmannsegg during my stay. He was the most serious-minded of them all, able and reliable. There was, besides, von Goué, a man hard to decipher or describe, a blunt, thick-set Hanoverian, quiet and reserved. He was not wanting in talent in many directions. It was conjectured that he was a natural son; he loved, besides, a certain mysteriousness of deportment, and concealed his most intimate plans and desires under the cover of many eccentricities, and was, indeed, the very soul of this odd confederation of knights, though he never strove after the post of grand-master. On the contrary, when, just at this time, their head left them, he supported the election of another than himself, and was content to exercise his influence through this new master. Thus he contrived so to manage several trifling incidents as to make them appear of great importance and endue them with legendary form. But with all this he seemed to have no serious purpose, he was only concerned to dispel the tedium which he and his colleagues necessarily felt during the protracted business, and to fill up the empty void, if only with cobwebs. Moreover, this legendary tomfoolery was carried on with great apparent seriousness, and no one thought it ridiculous to treat a certain mill as a castle, and the miller as lord of the fortress, to declare the "Four Sons of Aymon" a canonical book, and to read extracts from it with great reverence on state occasions. The dubbing of knights took place with traditional symbols, borrowed from several orders of knighthood. One of the principal sources of amusement was the fact, that this manifest jest was treated as a secret; the travesty was carried on publicly, and yet nothing was to be said about it. The list of the whole body of knights was printed with as much importance as a calendar of the Imperial diet, and if families ventured to scoff at the whole business, and declare it absurd and ridiculous, they were immediately punished, for the knights

would never rest from scheming until a solemn husband or near relation was induced to join the company and to be dubbed knight; and then what a burst of malicious joy ensued at the annoyance of the relatives!

With this order of chivalry another and a stranger one was interwoven, which aimed at being philosophical and mystical, and had no name of its own. The first degree was called the "Transition," the second the "Transition of the transition," the third the "Transition of the transition to the transition," and the fourth the "Transition of the transition to the transition of the transition." To interpret the lofty meaning of these degrees was the duty of the initiated, and this was done by the directions in a little printed book, in which these strange words were explained, or rather amplified, in a manner stranger still. To deal with such matters as these was their most coveted pastime. The folly of Behrisch and the perversity of Lenz seemed here to be united; I only repeat that not a trace of purpose was to be found behind these mysteries.

Although I very readily took my part in such follies, and had indeed been the first to put in order the extracts from "The Four Sons of Aymon," and had suggested how they should be read at feasts and on solemn occasions, and had even declaimed them myself with great emphasis, still I had already grown weary of such things, and therefore as I missed my Frankfort and Darmstadt friends, I was greatly pleased to have come across GOTTER, who attached himself to me with an honest affection, which I returned with hearty goodwill. His was a refined, clear, and cheerful mind, his talents carefully directed and not allowed to rust, he aimed at French polish, and delighted in that part of English literature which deals with moral and pleasing subjects. We spent many pleasant hours together, talking over our studies, plans, and inclinations. At his instigation I produced several trifles, especially as, being connected with Göttingen, he wanted some of my poems for Boie's *Almanach*.

It was thus that I came into contact with those young men of genius who had formed a society of their own, and afterwards effected so much and in so many various ways. The two Counts Stolberg, Bürger, Voss, Hölty, and others, had found a common source of faith and inspiration in

Klopstock, whose influence extended far and wide. In this ever-increasing circle of German poets there developed, together with many and various poetical gifts, another mental attitude, to which I can give no satisfactory name. It might be called the need of independence, which always arises in times of peace, and at a time when, properly speaking, there is least dependence. In war we bear rude force as best we can, we feel ourselves physically and economically, but not morally, injured; the constraint shames no one, and it is no disgraceful service to serve the time; we accustom ourselves to suffer from friends and foes; we have desires, but no opinions. In peace, on the contrary, man's love of freedom becomes more and more prominent, and the more free he is, the more free he wishes to be. He will tolerate no authority over him; he will not be restrained, no one shall be restrained; and this tender, indeed morbid feeling, appears in noble souls under the form of justice. This spirit and feeling showed itself everywhere at this time, and just where the number of the oppressed was smallest, the desire was strongest to free even these from temporary oppression, so that a kind of moral feud arose, an interference of the individual with the government, which, with laudable beginnings, led to endless disastrous results.

Voltaire, by the protection he had bestowed on the Calas family, had excited great attention and won much respect. In Germany Lavater's attempt against the *Landvogt* (sheriff of the province) had been almost more remarkable and important. Æsthetic feeling, combined with youthful courage, advanced fearlessly; those who had but recently been studying to qualify themselves for holding office now constituted themselves overseers of those in office, and the time was drawing near when dramatist and novelist alike preferred to seek their villains among ministers and officials. Hence arose a world, half real, half imaginary, of action and reaction, in which we afterwards lived to experience the most malicious scandal and mischief-making, to which the writers of periodicals and journals gave vent in a kind of frenzy, under the name of justice; and their influence was all the more irresistible in that they led the public to believe that it was itself the only true tribunal—a foolish notion, since no public

can have any executive power, and in dismembered Germany public opinion was of no benefit or injury to anyone.

So far as we young people were concerned, any part we took in this movement was quite irreprehensible. But poetry, morality, and a high ideal had combined to fill us with similar aims, which were perfectly innocuous but barren of result.

By his *Hermannsschlacht*, * and its dedication to Joseph the Second, Klopstock had stirred up intense excitement. The Germans, freeing themselves from the Roman yoke, were nobly and powerfully represented, and this picture was calculated to awaken the nation to a consciousness of its powers. But since in times of peace patriotism is practically confined to everyone sweeping his own doorstep, minding his own business, and learning his own lesson, that all may go well in his house, the national feeling excited by Klopstock found no object on which to exercise itself. Frederick had vindicated the honour of one part of Germany against the united world, and it was free to every member of the nation, by lauding and venerating this great prince, to share in his victory; but what was to come of this new, warlike spirit of defiance? what direction should it take, what effect should it produce? At first it merely assumed poetic form, and under the spur of this incitement there was an outburst of those bardic songs (*Bardenlieder*), afterwards the object of so much censure and ridicule. There were no external enemies to fight; so people fashioned tyrants for themselves, and for this purpose princes and their servants were made to lend their characters, first only in general outline, but gradually in fuller detail. Now it was that poetry attached itself vehemently to that interference with the administration of justice, which we have criticised above; and it is remarkable to see how many poems of that time are imbued with a spirit destructive of every class distinction whether monarchic or aristocratic.

For my own part, I continued to make poetry the expression of my own feelings and fancies. Little poems like the "Wanderer" belong to this time; they were inserted in the Göttingen *Musenalmanach*. But from whatever

* The fight of Herman, the "Arminius" of Tacitus, against the Romans.—*Trans.*

taint of the mania above referred to had crept into my blood, I endeavoured to free myself soon after in *Götz von Berlichingen*, for here I described how in disordered times this loyal and upright man resolves to take the law and the executive power into his own hands, but is driven to despair when he is forced to appear in an equivocal and even rebellious light in the eyes of the sovereign, whom he recognizes and reveres.

Klopstock's odes had introduced into German literature not so much Northern mythology itself as the names of the Northern gods and goddesses; and glad as I was to make use of everything else that was offered me, I could not bring myself to use these, and that for the following reasons: I had long been acquainted with the stories of the Edda, from the preface to Mallet's *Danish History*, and had at once made myself master of them. When asked in society to tell some tale, these were among the stories I most preferred to narrate. Herder put Resenius into my hands, and made me better acquainted with the heroic *sagas*. But all these things, much as I esteemed them, I could never bring within the circle of my own poetic faculty. Nobly as they excited my imagination, they remained, nevertheless, outside the sphere of objective sensuous perception, while the rich mythology of the Greeks, transformed by the world's greatest artists into visible and conceivable form, still lived before our eyes. I was in general reluctant to introduce divinities of any kind, because they had their abode outside that Nature which I sought to imitate. Then what reason had I for substituting Odin for Jupiter, and Thor for Mars, and instead of the clearly defined images of the south, to introduce misty figures, nay, mere verbal sounds, into my poems? On the one side, they were related in my mind rather to Ossian's equally formless heroes, only these were ruder and more gigantic; on the other, I connected them with the less sombre fairy-tale; for the humorous vein which runs through all the northern myths, had always struck me with delight. It seemed to me the only mythology which jests with itself throughout, and sets before us marvellous giants, wizards, and monsters warring against a wondrous race of gods, and having as their sole object the confusion and mockery of the

government of those deities, whom, moreover, they threaten with miserable and irrevocable ruin.

I felt a similar if not an equal interest in the Indian fables, which I first learned to know from Dapper's *Travels*, and added them to my store of tales with much delight. The Altar of Ram was always most successful with my hearers; and in spite of the great variety of characters in this tale, the ape Hannemann remained the general favourite. But these monsters also were too vague or vast to satisfy my poetic sense; they lay too far from the truth, towards which my mind strove unceasingly.

But against all these inartistic phantoms my appreciation of the beautiful was to be defended by a great and noble influence. Fortunate is the literary epoch in which great works of the past are brought to light again and pass into general circulation, because they then produce an absolutely fresh effect. The light of Homer appeared again above our horizon, and that at a most favourable moment, seeing it accorded exactly with the spirit of the times; for our constant reference to nature had at last taught us to look at even the writings of the ancients from this point of view. What several travellers had done for the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, others had done for Homer. The first step was taken by Guys; Wood carried on the work with vigour. A Göttingen review of the then very rare original, made us acquainted with the general design, and showed us how far it had been carried out. We now no longer saw in the Homeric poems a description of an exaggerated and artificial heroic age, but the truthful picture of society as it existed in remote antiquity, and tried to realize it for ourselves. At the same time we could not see the force of the assertion, that to a right understanding of Homer's characters a knowledge is necessary of those savage races and their manners which are described for us by the travellers in new worlds; for it could not be denied that both Europeans and Asiatics are represented in the Homeric poems as having already attained a high degree of culture,—perhaps higher than that enjoyed at the time of the Trojan war. But the statement was nevertheless in harmony with the prevailing worship of nature, and to that extent we accepted it.

My studies were thus concerned with anthropology in the higher sense, and more immediately with poetry in its most attractive form, but they could not prevent me from realizing daily that I was living in Wetzlar. Not an hour passed without some talk about the point reached in the process of "visitation," the ever-growing difficulties, and the discovery of fresh abuses. Here the Holy Roman Empire was once more assembled, not for mere outward ceremonies, but for an object affecting the nation's deepest life. But once again the thought of that half-empty banqueting-hall on the Coronation Day occurred to me, when the bidden guests stayed away, because they were too proud. In this case, they had come, it is true, but even worse symptoms were revealed. The want of coherence in the whole body, the mutual opposition of the several parties, were constantly apparent; and it was no secret that princes had confidentially communicated to each other their intention of seeing whether, on this occasion, something could not be extorted from the supreme authority.

Every right-minded man will feel what a bad impression all the petty anecdotes of neglect and delays, of injustice and corruption, must have made upon a young man who was striving after what was good, and educating his mind to that end. Under such circumstances, whence could any reverence for the law or for the judge arise? Even if the greatest confidence had been placed in the effects of the visitation,—if it could have been believed that it would fully accomplish its high purpose,—it still afforded no help for the eager aspirations of happy youth. The formalities of the proceedings all tended towards delay; to achieve anything or to make one's mark it was necessary always to be on the side of the party in the wrong—the side of the accused—and to be skilled in the art of thrust and parry.

Unable, among all these distractions, to fix my mind on æsthetic production of any kind, I lost myself more and more in æsthetic speculations, as indeed all theorizing indicates defect or stagnation of productive power. As before with Merck, so now with Gotter, I endeavoured to discover maxims which should regulate all creative effort. But I was no more successful than they. Merck was a sceptic

and an eclectic; Gotter adhered to such examples as best chimed in with his own views. Sulzer was about to publish his theory, but it was more fitted for the amateur than the artist. People sharing his point of view demand before all things moral results; and hence at once arises a difference of opinion between those who produce and those who utilize; for a good work of art can, and indeed, must have moral consequences; but to require moral ends of the artist, is to destroy his profession.

The statements of the ancients upon these important subjects had been my study for years, though I had not read them in any systematic order. Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Longinus—none had escaped me, but they did not help me in the least, for all these men presupposed an experience which I lacked. They led me into a world infinitely rich in works of art; they unfolded the merits of excellent poets and orators, of most of whom the names alone are left us, and made me realize only too vividly that a vast amount of data should lie before us, before we begin to form an opinion; that we must first accomplish something ourselves, nay, indeed, fail in something, in order to discover our own capacities, and those of others. My acquaintance with the achievements of those ancient times was still due to study and reading rather than to experience of life, whereas, especially in the case of the most famous orators, it was a striking fact that they owed their training to actual life, and that it was impossible to speak of their characteristics as artists, without at the same time mentioning their personal disposition. With poets this seemed to be less the case: still everywhere nature and art appeared to come into contact through life alone, and thus, as the result of all my thought and endeavour, I reverted to my old resolve of investigating nature both within and without, and of allowing her absolute sway, while following her in loving imitation.

For the execution of these resolutions which possessed me day and night, there lay before me two great and almost overwhelming subjects, and if I could do anything like justice to their wealth of possibilities, I was bound to produce a work of value. These subjects were the older epoch, in which the life of Götz von Berlichingen fell, and the modern one,

of which the unhappy outcome was depicted in *Werther*. I have already spoken of my historical preparations for the former work; it now remains for me to explain the political influences which led to the production of the latter.

My resolve to give free play to the idiosyncracies of my inner nature, and, at the same time, to remain receptive to the characteristic influences of the external world, transported me into the strange atmosphere in which *Werther* was designed and written. I sought to free my inner life from every alien influence, to look with love on all around me, and to allow all beings, from man downwards to the lowest comprehensible creature, to act upon me, each after its own kind. Thus arose a wonderful affinity with the several objects of nature, and a heartfelt concord and harmony with the whole, so that every change, whether of place and country, of hour and season, or of any other part of the natural order, affected me profoundly. The eye of the painter was added to that of the poet, the beautiful rural landscape, brightened by its smiling river, increased my love of solitude, and favoured my silent contemplation of all that lay around me.

But ever since I had left the family circle in Sesenheim, and again my circle of friends at Frankfort and Darmstadt, I felt in my heart a void I could not fill; I was therefore in the mental condition in which our inclinations, provided they are slightly veiled, steal upon us unawares and frustrate all our good resolutions.

Now that the author has reached this stage in his undertaking, he feels for the first time light-hearted about his work, for only from this point onwards will the book assume its intended shape. It has no pretensions to completeness; it is only intended to fill in the gaps of an author's life, to complete much that is fragmentary, and to preserve the memory of lost and forgotten ventures. But it is not my purpose, nor would it be possible, to do over again what I have already once accomplished. Moreover, the poet would now call in vain upon his darkened mental powers to conjure up again the charm which made those days in Lahnthal so delightful to him. Fortunately his good genius has made this unnecessary by impelling him, while still in the vigour of youth, to fix and describe the impressions of the

immediate past, and to seize the happy moment for making them public. That we are here referring to that small volume known as *Werther* is sufficiently evident, but we shall have occasion by degrees to give further details both with regard to the characters and to the opinions it contains.

Among the young men, attached to the embassy, who had to prepare themselves for their future official career, was one whom we were accustomed to call simply the "Bridegroom." He was remarkable for his calm and even manner, the clearness of his views, the decision of his words and actions. His cheerful activity, his persevering industry recommended him so favourably to his superiors, that an early appointment was promised him. On the strength of these expectations he ventured to betroth himself to a lady who entirely accorded with his tastes and temperament. After the death of her mother, she had shown energy and resource as the head of a numerous young family, and had alone sustained her father in his widowhood, so that a future husband might hope for the same care for himself and his children, and look for great happiness in his home. Even those who had no such personal aims in view admitted that she was a desirable helpmate. She was one of those who, if they do not inspire ardent passion, are nevertheless destined to attract the benevolent regard of all. A neat and lissom figure, a pure and healthy temperament, with the glad energy of life attendant on it, a direct and simple handling of daily duties—all these were hers in full measure. I always felt happy in the contemplation of such qualities, and liked to frequent the society of those who possessed them; and though I might not always find opportunity to render them any actual service, I shared with them rather than with others the enjoyment of those innocent pleasures which youth can always find at hand, and enjoy without much cost or effort. Moreover, since it is established that ladies only dress with an eye to their own sex, and are unwearied in vying with one another in their finery, those always pleased me most who, simply and neatly clad, give their lover, their bridegroom, the silent assurance that they only wish to please him, and that they could lead their whole life thus without much ceremony or outlay.

Such women are not too self-engrossed; they have time to consider the world around them, and a mind sufficiently

at ease to fit and adapt their life to its requirements. They become wise and sensible without much effort, and require but few books for their education. Such was the bride.* The bridegroom, upright and confiding as he was, soon made all whom he esteemed acquainted with her: and as he had to spend the greater part of his day in strict attention to business, he was pleased that his betrothed, when her household duties were done, should find other amusements, and join with friends of both sexes in walks and country expeditions. Lotte—for so we shall call her—was unassuming, and that for a double reason; first, by her nature, which was more calculated to inspire general kindly feeling than any particular inclination; and then her affections were set upon a man who was both worthy of her and had declared himself ready to unite his fate with hers for life. She created an atmosphere of happiness around her; for surely, if it is a pleasing sight to see parents bestow unceasing care upon their children, it is still more beautiful to see brothers and sisters do the same for one another. In the former case we seem to see the force of natural instinct and social tradition; in the latter, rather an exercise of free choice and spontaneous feeling.

The new comer, perfectly free from all ties, was without care in the presence of a girl who, already engaged to another, would never interpret even the most obliging services as acts of courtship, and therefore found all the more pleasure in them. At first he went quietly his own way, but was soon so attracted and enthralled, and at the same time treated by the young couple with such intimate friendliness, that he no longer knew himself. Indolent and dreamy, because ever dissatisfied with the present, he found all that he had lacked in a friend, who, while she was not blind to the future, seemed only to live for the present. She enjoyed his companionship; he soon could not bear her absence, as she formed for him a connecting link with the every-day world; and before long they became inseparable companions in her varied avocations, in the fields and in the meadows, in the vegetable-patch and in the garden. When business permitted, the bridegroom too was of the

* Persons betrothed are in Germany called "bride" and "bridegroom."—*Trans.*

party; their intimacy had sprung up unawares, and all three hardly knew how they had come to be so indispensable to one another. So through the splendid summer months they lived a true German idyll; its prose the fertile land, its poetry their pure affection. Wandering through ripe cornfields, they delighted in the dewy morning; the song of the lark, the cry of the quail, were music to them; sultry hours followed, fierce storms came on, they only drew the closer together, and this steadfast love easily smoothed away many a little domestic trouble. And so one week-day followed another, and all seemed holidays, — the whole calendar should have been printed in rubric. Anyone who remembers what was predicted of the happily unhappy friend of the "New Heloise" will understand my feeling. "And sitting at the feet of his beloved, he will peel hemp, and he will wish for nothing else than to peel hemp to-day, to-morrow, and the day after, nay, his whole life long."

I can say little, yet enough for the purpose, respecting a young man, whose name was afterwards but too often mentioned. This was Jerusalem, son of the liberal and gentle-hearted divine of the same name. He too had an appointment at an embassy; a good figure, well-knit, and of medium height; a face rather round than oval; soft and tranquil features, and all else befitting a fair and handsome youth, with more of appeal than power in the glance of his blue eyes. His dress was that introduced in Lower Germany in imitation of the English,—a blue frock-coat, tan-coloured waistcoat and breeches, and boots with brown tops. The author never visited him, nor saw him at his own residence, but often met him among his friends. The young man was temperate though kindly in his speech. He took an interest in productions of the most different nature, and especially loved those drawings and sketches which catch the tranquil character of solitary places. On such occasions he would show etchings by Gesner, and encourage amateurs to study them. He took no part in all our mimic play at chivalry, but lived for himself and his own thoughts. It was said he nursed a strong passion for the wife of one of his friends. In public they were never seen together. Altogether little was known of him, except

that he occupied himself with English literature. As the son of a wealthy man, he had no occasion either to devote himself over-strenuously to business, or to make pressing application for an early appointment.

Those etchings by Gesner increased our pleasure and interest in rural objects, and a little poem, which was enthusiastically received by us in our circle, allowed us from that moment to think of nothing else. Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* would of necessity appeal to all minds who had reached that particular stage of culture and had adopted a corresponding habit of thought. For in this poem all that we loved and prized in actual life, all that we sought after so eagerly in the hopes of partaking of it with all the joy of youth, is transported out of a living, active present into a vanished past. Highdays and holidays in the country, church consecrations and village fairs, the grave gathering of the aged under the village lime-tree, succeeded in its turn by youth's wilder joy in dancing, while the more educated classes look on in sympathy. What more seemly than pleasures such as these, moderated as they were by an excellent country pastor, who knew how to moderate every excess, and remove every occasion of quarrel and dispute? Here we found another honest Wakefield, in his familiar circle, yet no longer as he lived and loved, but as a shadow recalled by the soft mournful tones of the elegiac poet. Nothing could be happier than the thought underlying such a picture, supposing that the poet's aim is to evoke an innocent past with graceful melancholy. And in this pleasing task, how well has our English author succeeded in every sense of the word! I shared with Gotter his enthusiasm for this charming poem, so we both undertook a translation of it, in which, however, he proved the more successful: for I had been too painstaking in my efforts to imitate in our language the delicate significance of the original, and so, though happy in my rendering of single passages, had not done equally well for the whole poem.

Now if it is true, as has been said, that the highest happiness lies in a sense of longing, and if genuine longing can only be felt for something unattainable, everything now conspired to make the youth whom we are accompanying on his wanderings the happiest of mortals. An affection

for one betrothed to another, the effort to incorporate the masterpieces of foreign literature in our own, the endeavour to pourtray natural objects, not only with words, but also with style and pencil, without any proper technical knowledge,—each of these separately would have sufficed to make the heart full and to oppress the spirit. But new events occurred to tear the youth from his state of blissful melancholy, and to create fresh causes of unrest.

HÖPFNER, the professor of law, was at Giessen. He was highly esteemed by Merck and Schlosser, who valued both his professional ability and his intelligence and character. I had long ago desired his acquaintance, and now, when these two friends settled to pay him a visit, to negotiate some literary matters, it was agreed that I also should take this opportunity of going to Giessen. But, as often happens in the high spirits born of happy peaceful times, we were not satisfied with attaining our ends in a direct way, but must needs, like true children, make a jest even of necessity, so it was decided that I was to make my appearance as a stranger, in unfamiliar garb, and once more indulge my love for masquerading. One bright morning, before sunrise, I walked from Wetzlar along the Lahn, up the charming valley; such ramblings were once more my greatest joy. I could then invent, connect, elaborate, and was quietly happy and cheerful with myself alone. I could set right those contradictions which the clumsy and bewildering world continually thrust upon me. When I had come to the end of my journey, I looked for Höpfner's house, and knocked at his study door. In reply to his "Come in!" I modestly appeared before him as a student who was returning home from the universities, and wished on his way to become acquainted with the most distinguished men of the day. I was prepared for his questioning me about my personal circumstances; I made up a plausible, commonplace tale, which seemed to satisfy him, and as I gave myself out as a jurist, I did not fare badly; for I knew what his merits were in this department, and that he was just then writing on the *jus naturale*. Conversation, however, often halted, and he seemed to be looking for an autograph-album,* or for me

* A *Stammbuch* is a sort of album for autographs and short contributions.—*Trans.*

to take my leave. I managed to protract my visit, as I expected with certainty the arrival of Schlosser, whose punctuality was well known to me. He came at last, was welcomed by his friend, and after one side glance at me took little further notice of me. Höpfner, however, drew me into conversation, and showed himself throughout humane and kindly. I at last took my leave, and hastened to the inn, where I exchanged a few hurried words with Merck, and arranged further plans.

The friends had resolved to ask Höpfner to dinner, and also that same CHRISTIAN HEINRICH SCHMIDT who had played a part, though a very subordinate one, in German literature. The whole jest was really aimed at him, and the intention was to punish him in fun for various offences he had committed. When the guests had assembled in the dining-room, I sent a message by the waiter, to ask whether the gentlemen would allow me to dine with them. Schlosser, who was well suited for a serious *rôle*, opposed the suggestion, because they did not wish their friendly conversation disturbed by a third party. But, thanks to the urgency of the waiter and to Höpfner's advocacy, who assured his friend that I was quite tolerable, I was admitted, and at the beginning of the meal assumed a modest and bashful bearing. Schlosser and Merck put no restraint upon themselves, and conversed on a variety of subjects as freely as if no stranger were present. The most important literary questions and the leading men of the day were discussed. I now grew somewhat bolder, bore with equanimity both Schlosser's serious rebukes and Merck's sarcasm; but all my darts were directed against Schmidt, and they fell sharply and surely on the weak points which I knew so well.

I had drunk moderately of my pint of table-wine, but the gentlemen ordered better wine to be brought, and did not fail to offer me some. After many topics of the day had been discussed, the conversation turned to general channels, and we began to debate the question, which will be debated as long as there are authors in the world, whether literature was rising or declining, progressing or retrograding? This question, on which old and young, budding and retiring authors seldom agree, was discussed with cheerful interest, but with no definite design of coming to a decision.

At last I put in my oar, and said, "The literatures of various nations, as it seems to me, have seasons, which alternating with each other, as in nature, bring forth certain phenomena, and repeat themselves in due order. Hence I do not believe that any epoch of a literature can be praised or blamed as a whole; it is especially repellant to me to see how certain talents, which are the product of their times, are extolled and vaunted to the skies, while others are censured and depreciated. The throat of the nightingale quickens with the spring, but so does that of the cuckoo. The butterflies, which so delight the eye, and the gnats, which so torment us, are called into being by the same heat of the sun. If this were duly considered, we should not hear the same complaints renewed every ten years, and the vain trouble which is taken to root out this or that offensive thing, would not be so often wasted." The party gazed at me, wondering whence I had got so much wisdom and tolerance. But I continued quite calmly to compare literary phenomena with natural objects, and (I know not how) came to speak of molluscs, and mentioned many marvellous things about them. I said that these were creatures who, it could not be denied, had a kind of body, even, indeed, some sort of shape; but, since they had no bones, it was impossible to define them exactly, as they were nothing better than living slime; nevertheless, the sea must have such inhabitants. But as I carried the simile beyond its due limits in order to include Schmidt, who was present, and that class of characterless scribblers, I was reminded that a simile carried too far loses all its value. "Well, then, I will return to the earth," I replied, "and speak of the ivy. As those creatures have no bones, so this has no trunk; but wherever it attaches itself, it likes to play the chief part. It belongs to old walls, in which there is nothing left to destroy; but is very properly removed from new buildings. It sucks the sap out of the trees; and I hate it most when it clambers up a post, and tries to assure me that this is a living trunk, because it has covered it with leaves."

In spite of repeated reproaches on the score of my obscure and inapplicable similes, I spoke with more and more warmth against all parasitical creatures, and as far as my knowledge of nature then extended, did not acquit

myself unworthily. I at last raised a cheer for all independent men, and called down destruction on all those who forced themselves upon them, seized Höpfner's hand after dinner, shook it violently, declared him the best of men, and finally embraced both him and the others right heartily. My new and worthy friend thought he must be dreaming, until Schlosser and Merck at last solved the riddle; the joke when revealed provoked a general hilarity, which was shared by Schmidt himself, who was appeased by an acknowledgment of his real merits, and the interest we took in his hobbies.

This introduction, so ingeniously carried out, could not but add life and zest to our literary congress, and this was the aim we chiefly kept in view. Merck, busy now with æsthetics, now with literature, now with commerce, had stimulated Schlosser to use his sound sense and all-round knowledge in editing the Frankfort *Gelehrte Anzeigen* (Learned Advertiser) for that year. With them were associated Höpfner, and other university men in Giessen, a distinguished schoolmaster, Rector Wenck of Darmstadt, and many other men of talent. Every one of them possessed adequate historical and theoretical knowledge in his department, and the spirit of the times enabled these men to work as with one mind. The first two years of this periodical (which later fell into other hands) bear striking witness to the breadth of view, the clearness of insight, the honesty of purpose of the contributors. Humane and cosmopolitan sentiments are encouraged; able men held in just esteem are protected against interference of every kind; their defence is undertaken against enemies, and especially against scholars who use what has been taught them to the detriment of their instructors. Some of the most interesting articles are the critiques on other periodical publications, the Berlin *Bibliothek* (Library) and the *German Mercury;* these articles show an astonishing mastery of many subjects, as well as admirable insight and fairness.

As for myself, they saw well enough that I was deficient in all the qualities of a critic, properly so called. My historical knowledge was disconnected: the history of the world, of science and literature had only attracted me in isolated epochs, the subjects themselves I knew only partially

and in broad outlines. My capacity for giving life to things, and making them live for me, detached from their connection, enabled me to be perfectly at home in a given century or a given department of science, without having any information as to what preceded or what followed. Thus a certain half practical, half theoretical faculty had been awakened in me, by which I could represent things, rather as they should be than as they were, and that not by philosophical reasoning, but rather by sudden intuition. To this was added a great power of receptivity, and a willingness to receive the opinions of others, if they did not directly clash with my own convictions.

Our literary union was also fostered by an animated correspondence, and by frequent personal intercourse, which was made possible by the short distances which separated us. The first to read a book gave an account of it; often a joint reviewer of the same book was found; the matter was talked over in connection with kindred subjects, and if at last a definite view was reached, one of them undertook the office of editor. Thus many reviews are as sound as they are spirited, as pleasant as they are satisfactory. The part of reporter often fell to my lot; my friends also permitted me to insert a jest now and then in their own compositions, and, when subjects occurred which lay in my province and in which I was deeply interested, would even allow me to write independently. It would be vain for me to endeavour, either by description or reflection, to recall the real mind and spirit of those days, if the two years of the above-mentioned periodical did not furnish me with the most precise records. Extracts from passages, in which I recognize myself once more, may appear in future in their proper place, together with essays of a similar character.

In the course of this brisk exchange of knowledge, opinions, and convictions, I very soon became better acquainted with Höpfner, and grew much attached to him. As soon as we were alone I used to speak with him on subjects connected with his own department, which was to be my department also; and then I never failed to receive explanation and instruction naturally and logically expounded. I had not yet discovered as clearly as I did later that I could

learn from books and conversation, but not from connected professional lectures. A book allowed me to pause at a passage, and even to look back, which is impossible with the oral delivery of a teacher. Often at the beginning of the lecture, some thought laid hold of me, which I pursued, and so missed what followed, and entirely lost the thread. This had been the case in my lectures on jurisprudence; and on this account I was glad of every opportunity of talking with Höpfner, who entered readily into my doubts and scruples, and filled up many gaps in my knowledge, until at last I began to wish to remain with him at Giessen, and learn from him, yet without losing touch with my Wetzlar attachments. My two friends both opposed this wish, at first unconsciously, but afterwards consciously; for both were not only anxious to leave the place themselves, but were also interested in getting me away.

Schlosser disclosed to me that he had formed, first a friendly, then a closer connection with my sister, and that he was only looking for an early appointment to be united to her. This statement surprised me to some extent, although I might have found it out long ago from my sister's letters; but we easily pass over that which might hurt the good opinion which we entertain of ourselves, and I now realized for the first time that I was really jealous about my sister; a feeling which I was the less able to conceal from myself, as, since my return from Strasburg, our relationship had become even more intimate. How much time had we not spent in telling each other each little concern of the heart, the trifling love affairs, and other such matters, which had occurred in the interval. In the field of imagination, too, had not a new world been opened to me, into which I was looking forward to conduct her also? My own little productions, and a world-wide wealth of poetry, were gradually to be made known to her. Thus I made for her *impromptu* translations of those passages of Homer, which would most interest her. I read aloud to her, in German, Clarke's literal translation, as fluently as I could; my version generally found its way into metrical turns and endings, and the vividness with which its images had come home to me, the vehemence with which I expressed them, removed all the blemishes of an involved construction; and her mind followed what my mind laid

before her. We passed many hours of the day in this way; and then if any friends of hers met together, there was a unanimous demand for the Wolf Fenris and the Ape Hannemann, and how often have I not been obliged to repeat in every detail how Thor and his comrades were deluded by the magic of the giants! And that is why these legends have left such a pleasant impression on my mind, so that I prize them as highly as anything my imagination can recall. I had also drawn my sister into my Darmstadt circle of friends, and even my wanderings and occasional absences only bound us closer together, for I talked with her by letter of everything that happened to me, imparted to her every little poem, even if only a note of exclamation, and she was the first to see every letter which I received, and every answer I wrote. All this eager intercourse had ceased since my departure from Frankfort: my residence in Wetzlar was not fruitful enough for such a correspondence, and my attachment to Lotte may have encroached upon my attentions to my sister; be this as it may, she felt lonely, perhaps neglected, and was, therefore, all the more ready to lend an ear to the honest wooing of an honourable man, who, serious, reserved, and worthy of all confidence and esteem, passionately lavished on her an affection which he was generally slow to bestow. I was now forced to resign myself, and try not to grudge my friend his happiness, though my self-confidence did not fail to assure me in secret, that if the brother had not been absent, the friend would never have so prospered in his suit.

My friend and probable brother-in-law was now very anxious that I should return home, because my presence would render possible that freer intercourse for which his suddenly awakened passion seemed ardently to crave. Therefore, on his hasty departure, he elicited from me a promise to follow him without delay.

My next hope was that Merck, whose time was free, would lengthen out his stay in Giessen, so that I might be able to spend some hours of every day with Höpfner, while my friend busied himself with the Frankfort *Gelehrte Anzeigen;* but he was not to be moved, and if my brother-in-law was driven from the university by love, he was driven thence by hate. For as there are innate antipathies—just as some

people cannot endure cats, while other things are intensely repugnant to others,—so Merck was a deadly enemy to all university students, who, it must be admitted, at that time in Giessen, revelled in extreme roughness. Personally I did not mind them: I might have used them as masks for one of my carnival plays; but for him the sight of them by day, and their noise by night, was enough to utterly spoil his temper. He had spent the best days of his youth in French Switzerland, and had later enjoyed the charming society of courtiers, men of the world, business men, and cultivated men of letters; many army officers who felt a desire for intellectual culture, sought his society, and so his life had been passed in highly cultured circles. So it was not to be wondered at if the coarseness of the students vexed him, but he carried his aversion to them further than beseemed a man of his age, although he often made me laugh by his witty descriptions of their monstrous appearance and behaviour. Höpfner's invitations and my persuasions were of no avail; I was obliged to leave for Wetzlar with him as soon as possible.

I could scarcely bear to wait till I could introduce him to Lotte, but his presence in our circle did me no good; for as Mephistopheles, wherever he may go, will hardly bring a blessing with him, so he, by his indifference towards the object of my affections, brought me no joy, though he did not make me waver. I might have foreseen this result, if I had remembered that he had no particular taste for those slight, delicate persons, who, while shedding light and mirth around them, are themselves absolutely unassuming. He very soon preferred the Juno-like form of one of her friends, and since he himself had not the time to enter into further intimacy, he bitterly blamed me for not exerting myself to gain this magnificent figure, especially as she was free and without any tie. He thought that I did not understand my own advantage, and saw here only another regrettable instance of my special passion for wasting my time.

If it is dangerous to make a friend acquainted with the perfections of one's beloved, because he also may find her charming and desirable, the opposite danger is equally great, that he may perplex us by his dissent. This, indeed, was not the case here, for the image of her

graciousness had sunk too deeply into my heart for it to be so easily obliterated; but his presence and his persuasions nevertheless hastened my resolution to leave the town. He painted in the most glowing colours, for my benefit, a journey on the Rhine, which he was going to take with his wife and son, and excited in me the desire to see, at last, with my own eyes, those objects of which I had so often heard with envy. So, after he had left, I parted from Lotte, with a purer conscience indeed than I had done from Frederica, but still not without pain. Again in this case my inclination had by habit and indulgence grown more passionate than was right on my side, while, on the other hand, she and her betrothed maintained a cheerful self-control which could not have been lovelier or more delightful, and it was the very sense of security resulting from this calm, which made me forget every danger. Yet I could not conceal from myself that this adventure must come to a speedy end: for my friend's marriage with the charming Lotte waited for nothing but a momentarily expected promotion; and as every man of any resolution will always make a virtue of necessity, I embraced the determination to take my leave voluntarily before any unbearable contingency should drive me away.

THIRTEENTH BOOK

It had been settled with Merck, that while the weather was still fine we should meet at Coblentz at Frau von La Roche's. I took an opportunity which offered to send my luggage and whatever else I might want on my way down the Lahn to Frankfort, and then wandered along that beautiful river, so lovely in its windings, so varied in its shores, free of purpose, but oppressed in feelings—in a condition, when the silent presence of living nature is so beneficial to us. My eye, accustomed to discern those beauties of landscape that lie both within and beyond the scope of the painter's brush, revelled in the contemplation of near and distant objects, of bushy rocks, of sunny heights, of shady valleys, of towering castles, and of the blue range of mountains beckoning to us from afar.

I wandered on the right bank of the river, which glided along in the sunshine at some distance below me, half concealed by a thick growth of willows. Once more the old wish stirred in me, worthily to pourtray such objects. I happened to be holding a handsome pocket-knife in my left hand, and at that moment, from my inmost soul there arose, as it were, an imperative command, bidding me instantly fling this knife into the river. If I saw it fall, my wish to become an artist would be fulfilled, but if the splash of the knife was concealed by the overhanging willows, I was to abandon the wish and the endeavour. This whim had no sooner formed in me than I carried it out. For, regardless of the usefulness of my knife, in which several other instruments were combined, I threw it with my left hand, just as I held it, violently towards the river. But I was now to experience that deceptive ambiguity of oracles, of which the ancients make such bitter complaints. The fall of the knife into the river was hidden from me by the top

twigs of the willows, but the splash, which followed its fall, spurted up like a large fountain, and was perfectly visible to me. I did not interpret this phenomenon in my favour, and it was due to the doubt excited in me by this occurrence, that I soon began to pursue these studies less assiduously and eagerly and so myself gave occasion for the fulfilment of the oracle. For the moment, at any rate, the outer world was spoiled for me; I abandoned myself to my imaginations and feelings, and left behind me one after the other the finely situated castles and towns of Weilburg, Limburg, Diez, and Nassau, generally walking alone, but often for a short time taking up with some companion.

After some days of such pleasant wandering, I reached Ems. Here I much enjoyed bathing several times, and then went down the river in a boat. Then the ancient Rhine opened out before me, Oberlahnstein delighted me with its lovely situation, but incomparably noble and majestic seemed the castle of Ehrenbreitstein, standing proudly in all its power and strength. In fairest contrast at its feet lay the well-built little village of Thal; and here I easily found my way to the house of Privy Councillor von La Roche. My arrival had been announced by Merck, and I was very kindly received by this noble family, and soon accepted as one of its members. To the mother I was recommended by my literary and emotional tendencies; to the father by a cheerful appreciation of the world; to the daughters by my youth.

The house, at the extreme end of the valley, and raised a little above the river, commanded an open view down the stream. The rooms were high and spacious, and the walls were hung with pictures, hanging side by side as in a gallery. Every window on each side was a frame to a natural picture, which stood out vividly in the soft sunlight. I thought I had never seen such bright mornings nor such splendid evenings.

I was not long the only guest in the house. Leuchsenring had been summoned from Düsseldorf to attend the congress which was to be held here—a congress the object of which was in part artistic, in part merely a matter of sentiment. This man, with an extensive knowledge of modern literature, had made many acquaintances on his

various travels, but especially during a residence in Switzerland, and as his manners were pleasant and ingratiating, had gained much favour. He carried about with him several despatch-boxes, containing confidential correspondence with many friends; for at that time there was such a general habit of open-hearted intercourse, that one could not speak or write to any single individual without considering such a communication as common property. It was the fashion to explore the workings of one's own heart and that of others, and thanks to the government's indifference to such correspondence, to the great regularity and promptness of the Taxis* postal system, the security given by sealing, and the moderate cost of postage, this ethical and literary intercourse was soon very widespread.

Letters of this kind, especially from important persons, were carefully collected, and extracts from them were often read at friendly gatherings. Thus, as our interest in political matters waned, our knowledge of the wide field of morals was extended.

Leuchsenring's despatch-boxes contained many treasures of this kind. The letters of one Julie Bondeli were highly prized; she was famed as an intelligent and public-spirited woman, and as a friend of Rousseau. Anyone who had any connection with this extraordinary man, shared in the glory which emanated from him, and scattered far and wide over the country was a community of silent admirers who revered his name.

I liked to be present when such letters were read, as I was thus transported into an unknown world, and learned to know the real import of many a recent event. All indeed were not of equal value; and Herr von La Roche, a cheery man of the world and business man, who, although a Catholic, had already in his writings made a mock of both monks and priesthood, regarded these gatherings merely as a society in which many a nonentity drew attention to himself by his connection with important

* The post, managed by the princes of Thurn and Taxis, in different parts of Germany. An ancestor of this house first directed the post system in Tyrol, in 1450, and Alexander Ferdinand von Thurn received, in 1744, the office of Imperial Postmaster General, as a fief of the empire.—*Trans.*

men, a process which might result to his own advantage, but hardly to theirs. As a rule this sensible man withdrew from the company when the despatch-boxes were opened. If he did listen to some letters now and then, some sly remark invariably escaped him. For example, he once said that by this correspondence he was still more convinced of what he had always believed, namely, that ladies might spare their sealing-wax, as they need only fasten their letters with pins, and might be assured that they would reach their address unopened. It was always his habit to jest in this way about everything that lay outside the sphere of practical life, and in this he followed the disposition of his lord and master, Count Stadion, minister to the Elector of Mainz, whose influence had certainly not been calculated to counterbalance the natural worldliness and coldness of the boy's character by inspiring him with reverence for any mysterious and unknown power.

This seems a fitting place for an anecdote illustrating the count's great practical common-sense. When he took a liking to the orphan La Roche, and chose him for his pupil, he at once required the boy to perform the duties of a secretary. He gave him letters to answer, despatches to prepare, which he had then to copy out, often to write in cipher, to seal, and to address. This went on for several years. When the boy had grown into a youth, and was actually performing those services which had hitherto been a mere pretence, the count took him to a large writing-table, in which all the letters and packets the boy had written lay unbroken, preserved as exercises of his early days.

Another exercise which the count required of his pupil will not be so universally approved. La Roche had been obliged to practise himself in imitating, as accurately as possible, his lord and master's handwriting, that he might thus relieve him of the trouble of writing himself. Not only in business, but even in love affairs, the young man had to represent his preceptor. The count was passionately attached to a lady of rank and talent. Whilst he tarried in her society till late at night, his secretary was, in the meanwhile, sitting at home, hammering out the most ardent love-letters; the count would choose one of these, and send it

that very night to his beloved, who was thus necessarily convinced of the unquenchable ardour of her passionate adorer. Such early experiences were scarcely likely to inspire the youth with a very exalted notion of lover's letters.

An irreconcilable hatred of the priesthood had grown up in this man, who lived in the service of two spiritual electors; it had probably sprung from the sight of the coarse, vulgar, and degrading foolery which the monks in Germany were accustomed to carry on in many parts of the country, thereby hampering and destroying every sort of culture. His Letters on Monasticism attracted great attention, and were received with applause by all Protestants and by many Catholics.

If Herr von La Roche opposed everything that can be termed sentiment, and even firmly avoided every appearance of it, yet he did not attempt to conceal a tender fatherly love for his eldest daughter, and she well deserved it by the charm of her disposition. Rather short than tall of stature, and delicately built, she had a supple, graceful figure, very dark eyes, and a complexion of surpassing freshness and bloom. She, too, loved her father, and inclined to his opinions. Being an active man of business, most of his time was spent in the duties of his calling; and as the guests who stopped at his house were really attracted by his wife and not by him, society afforded him but little pleasure. At meal-times he was cheerful and entertaining, and did his best to keep his table at least free from the spice of sentiment.

Anyone acquainted with Frau von La Roche's views and turn of mind—and her long life and many writings have made her name known and honoured by every German,—may perhaps suppose that domestic disagreement must have sprung from such a union. Nothing of the kind. She was the most wonderful woman; and I know none to compare with her. Slight and delicately built, rather tall than short, she managed to preserve, even in advanced years, a certain elegance both of form and carriage, which happily combined between the manner of a lady of the aristocracy and of the middle classes. Her mode of dress had been the same for several years. A neat little cap with lappets well became her small head and delicate face, and the

brown or grey of her costume gave repose and dignity to her appearance. She spoke well, and always knew how to lend importance to her words by warmth of feeling. Her manner was the same towards everyone. But with all this her special characteristic has not yet been described; it is a hard one to define. She seemed to take an interest in everything, but as a matter of fact was impervious to all impressions. Gentle towards everyone, she could endure anything without suffering from it; the jests of her husband, the tenderness of her friends, the sweetness of her children—to all this she replied in the same manner, and thus always remained herself, unaffected in the world by good or evil, and in literature by excellence or weakness. To this disposition she owed that independent spirit which she was able to maintain even to an advanced age, through much sorrow and even misery. But it is only fair to say that her sons, then children of astonishing loveliness, did often elicit from her an expression of feeling other than that reserved for daily use.

Thus I lived for a time in a new and strangely pleasant society, until Merck arrived with his family. Then new affinities at once developed; for while the two ladies were drawn to one another, Merck naturally turned to Herr von La Roche as a connoisseur of the world and of business, and as a well-informed and travelled man. The boy associated with the boys, and the daughters, the eldest of whom soon particularly attracted me, fell to my share. It is a very pleasant sensation to feel a new passion stirring in us, before the old one is quite extinct. Thus at sunset we love to see the moon rise on the opposite horizon, and delight in the double radiance of the two heavenly luminaries.

There was now no lack of abundant entertainment either in or out of the house. We roamed about the neighbourhood, climbed up to Ehrenbreitstein on this side of the river, and to the Carthusian monastery on the other. The city, the Moselle bridge, the ferry which took us over the Rhine, all gave us the most varied pleasure. The new castle was not yet built; we were taken to its future site, and allowed to see the preliminary plans.

But in the midst of these happy circumstances there gradually developed that element of discord which generally

shows its evil effects, sooner or later, both in educated and uneducated circles. Merck, cold-blooded and restless as he was, had not long listened to that correspondence before he gave vent to many a mocking observation on the subjects discussed, as well as on the characters and their circumstances; at the same time he made to me in secret the strangest revelations as to what, he said, was their inner significance. Political secrets were never touched on, nor indeed anything that could have had a definite application; he only drew my attention to persons who, without remarkable talents, contrive, by a certain kind of tact, to obtain personal influence, and, by a wide acquaintance, try to attain to some importance; and from this time forward I had the opportunity of observing many men of the sort. As such people usually travel from place to place, arriving now here, now there, they have the advantage of novelty in their favour, and this we need neither envy them nor grudge them; for it has always been so from time immemorial, as every traveller has often experienced to his benefit, and every sojourner to his detriment.

Be that as it may, it is enough that from that time forward we watched somewhat uneasily and enviously all people of the sort, who travelled about on their own account, cast anchor in every city, and tried to gain a footing in some families at least. I have represented in "Pater Brey" a tender and soft-hearted brother of this guild, and another of cleverer and coarser stuff in a carnival play still to be published, under the title of *Satyros, or the deified Faun;* and if not a fair, it is, at any rate, a good-humoured sketch.

For the present, however, the strange elements of our little social world still worked together tolerably; we were partly held in check by habit and our natural good manners, and partly restrained by the special qualities of our hostess, who, being but lightly affected by what passed around her, lived in an atmosphere of ideal notions, and had the art of imparting them in so friendly a manner that she could always soften down any harshness and smooth away any friction which might arise in our company.

Merck had sounded a retreat just at the right time, so that the party separated on the best of terms. I went with

him and his family in a yacht, which was returning up the Rhine towards Mainz; and although this vessel went very slowly as it was, we besought the captain not to hurry. Thus we enjoyed at leisure, and in the loveliest weather, an infinite variety of sights, which seemed to increase in beauty every hour, with ever changing form and colour; and I only hope that, by the mere mention of such names as Rheinfels and St. Goar, Bacharach, Bingen, Elfeld, and Biberich, every one of my readers may be able to recall these places to their memory.

We had sketched industriously, and had thus at least gained a more lasting impression of the thousandfold changing aspects of those splendid shores. At the same time, by being so much longer together, by familiar intercourse on so many subjects our relationship became so much more intimate, that Merck gained a great influence over me, and I, as a good comrade, grew indispensable to his comfort. My eye, sharpened by nature, again turned to the contemplation of art, for which the beautiful Frankfort collections, both of paintings and engravings, afforded me the best opportunity; I was also much indebted to the kindness of MM. Ettling and Ehrenreich, but especially to the help of Nothnagel. To see the revelation of nature in art became with me a passion, which, at its height, must have appeared to other even passionate amateurs almost like madness; and how could such an inclination be better fostered than by a constant study of the splendid work of the Dutch painters? In order that I might acquire some practical knowledge in this line, Nothnagel gave me a little room, where I found everything requisite for painting in oils, and painted from nature some simple subjects of still life, one of which, a tortoise-shell knife-handle, inlaid with silver, so astonished my master, who had left me for an hour, that he maintained one of his assistants must have been with me during the time.

Had I patiently gone on practising on such objects, catching their light and shade and the peculiarities of their surface, I might have acquired some amount of practical skill, and opened out a way to something higher. But I fell into the mistake of all dilettanti—that of beginning with what is most difficult, and of attempting impossibilities. I

soon became involved in greater undertakings, in which I stuck fast, both because they were beyond my technical powers, and because I could not always keep steadily at work with that loving attention and patient industry, which can help even a beginner to accomplish something.

At the same time, I was once more transported into a higher sphere, by finding an opportunity of purchasing some fine plaster casts of antique heads. The Italians, who frequented the fairs, often brought with them good specimens of the kind, and usually sold them, after taking an impression of them. By this means I set up quite a little museum, and gradually collected the heads of the Laocöon, of his sons, and of Niobe's daughters. I also bought miniature copies of the most important works of classic art from the collection left, on his death, by a patron of art, and sought in this way to revive, as much as possible, the great impression made upon my mind in Mannheim.

Even while working in this way to cultivate, foster, and maintain any talent, taste, or other inclination of the kind that might be in me, I devoted a good part of the day, according to my father's wish, to my profession of advocate, and chance afforded me an excellent opportunity for practising it. After my grandfather's death, my uncle Textor had become councillor in his place, and entrusted to me such little offices as I was able to perform; and the brothers Schlosser did the same. I studied the documents; and my father also read them with much pleasure, as through his son, he again saw himself in a sphere of activity to which he had long been a stranger. We first talked the matters over, and I then had no difficulty in drawing up the necessary memoranda. We had an excellent clerk at hand, on whom one could rely for all legal technicalities; I delighted in this occupation all the more as it brought me nearer to my father, who, being perfectly satisfied with my conduct in this respect, was prepared to look with an eye of indulgence on all my other pursuits, in the eager expectation that I should now soon reap a harvest of fame as an author.

Now since every epoch has a certain uniformity of character, due to the diffusion of its ruling tendencies and opinions through all the departments of life, so in the domain of law those maxims were gradually followed, which were

already prevalent in religion and morals. Among the attorneys—the younger generation—and then among the judges—the elder—a spirit of humanity was diffused, and all vied with each other in being as humane as possible, even in legal affairs. Prisons were improved, crimes pardoned, punishments lightened, legitimations made easy, separations after unfortunate marriages encouraged, and one of our eminent lawyers won high fame by contriving, after hard fighting, to gain admittance for the son of an executioner to the college of surgeons. Vain was the opposition of guilds and corporations; one dam after another was broken down. Toleration in religious matters was not merely taught, but practised, and the civil constitution was threatened with a still greater innovation, when, with much wisdom, penetration, and force, an effort was made to recommend to the good nature of the age, greater forbearance towards the Jews. These new subjects for legal treatment, lying, as they did, outside the scope of law and tradition, and only asking for impartial investigation and kindly sympathy, required at the same time a more natural and animated style. This opened a happy field for the energies of us younger men, and we disported ourselves in it with delight. I can still remember how an imperial councillor's agent, in a case of the sort, sent me a very polite letter of commendation. The French *plaidoyers* served as stimulating models.

We were thus in a fair way to become better orators than jurists, a fact to which the conscientious Georg Schlosser once called my attention reproachfully. I had told him that I had read to my clients a statement written with much energy in their favour, and that they had evinced much satisfaction. Whereupon he replied, "In this case you showed yourself rather author than advocate. We must never ask how such a statement may please the client, but how it may please the judge."

But the occupations to which one devotes one's day are never so serious and pressing that one cannot find time enough in the evening to go to the play, and this was the case also with me. The lack of a really creditable stage had drawn my thoughts constantly to the German drama in the hope of discovering how one might best and

most effectively contribute to its advancement. Its condition in the second half of the last century is sufficiently well known, and everyone wishing for instruction on the point can find information on every hand. So I will here confine myself to inserting a few general remarks.

The success of the stage depended more upon the personality of the actors than upon the value of the pieces. This was especially the case with pieces half or wholly extemporized, when everything depended on the humour and talent of the comic actors. The material for such pieces must be drawn from the lowest ranks of life, that it may suit the manners of the audience it is intended to please. The immense popularity of these plays is due to this scope for direct application. They were always in vogue in South Germany, where they are retained to the present day, and where it is only necessary slightly to alter the comic figures from time to time according to the characters they represent. However, the German stage, in conformity with the serious character of the nation, soon took a moral turn, which was still more furthered by an influence from without. For the question arose, among strict Christians, whether the theatre belonged to those sinful things which are to be shunned in all cases, or to those indifferent things which can be good to the good and evil to the evil-minded. Some zealots denied the latter view, and held fast the opinion that no clergyman should ever enter a theatre. Now the contrary opinion could not be forcibly maintained, unless the theatre was declared to be not only harmless, but even useful. To be useful, it must be moral; and this was the direction in which it developed in North Germany, all the more because a kind of semi-educated taste had demanded the banishment of the traditional comic character,* and although intelligent persons took his part, he was forced to retire, after passing through a transition from the coarseness of the German *Hanswurst* (clown) to the neatness and delicacy of the Italian and French harlequins. Even Scapin and Crispin gradually vanished; the latter I saw played for the last time by Koch, in his old age.

* "Die lustige Person." That is to say, the permanent buffoon, like "Kasperle" in the German puppet-shows, or "Sganarelle" in Molière's broad comedies.—*Trans.*

Richardson's novels had already opened the eyes of the middle classes to a more refined morality. The severe and inevitable consequences of a slip on the woman's part were analysed with cruel clearness in *Clarissa*. Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson* treated the same theme; whilst the *Merchant of London* exhibited a misguided youth placed in the most terrible situation. The French dramas had the same aim, but set to work more moderately, and contrived to please by some compromise at the end. Diderot's *Père de Famille*, the *Honourable Criminal*, the *Vinegar Dealer*, the *Unconscious Philosopher*, *Eugenie*, and other works of the sort, suited that honest middle-class and domestic sentiment which had begun to prevail more and more. With us, the *Grateful Son*, the *Filial Deserter*, and their kith and kin, took a like course. The *Minister*, *Clementine*, and other pieces by Gehler, the *German Father of a Family*, by Gemmingen, all presented an attractive picture of the virtues of middle and even of lower class life, and delighted the general public. Eckhoff, by his noble personality, which gave to the actor's profession a dignity which it had hitherto lacked, contributed not a little to raise the standard of the leading characters in such pieces, for, himself an honourable man, he played honourable characters with great success.

In the midst of this general tendency to effeminacy on the German stage, Schröder arose as author and actor, and prompted by the connection between Hamburg and England, adapted some English comedies. He could only make a very general use of their subject-matter, as the originals are for the most part destitute of form, and even when they begin well and according to a definite plan, wander hopelessly from the mark before the end. The sole concern of their authors seems to be the introduction of the most astonishing scenes; and anyone accustomed to a sustained work of art is sorry to find at last all sense of coherence and proportion set at naught. Besides this, a wild, immoral, vulgarly dissolute tone distinctly pervades the whole to such an intolerable degree, that it would be difficult to cleanse the plot and the characters of all their impurities. It is a coarse and at the same time dangerous food, which can only have been enjoyed and digested by the populace

when half-corrupted at some definite period. Schröder did more for these plays than is usually known; he thoroughly altered them, assimilated them to the German mind, and softened them down as much as possible. But a bitter kernel still remains, because the joke often depends on the ill-usage of persons who may or may not deserve it. In these pieces, which also spread widely upon our stage, lay, therefore, a secret counterpoise to an over-sensitive morality; and the action of both kinds of drama on each other fortunately prevented the monotony into which the theatre would otherwise have fallen.

The German, kind and magnanimous by nature, dislikes to see anyone ill-treated. But as no man, however good his intentions, is ever quite sure that something contrary to his inclinations will not be attributed to him, and as comedy in general, if it is to please, always presupposes or awakens some spark of malice in the spectator, so, by a natural path, people were led to approve a course which had hitherto been deemed unnatural; this consisted in disparaging the upper classes, and in attacking them more or less openly. Satire, whether in prose or verse, had hitherto always avoided touching the court and the nobility. Rabener refrained from all jokes of that nature, and restricted himself to the lower circles. Zachariä often deals with country gentry, and exhibits their tastes and peculiarities in a comic aspect, but without contempt. Thümmel's *Wilhelmine*, a witty little composition, as amusing as it is bold, gained great applause, perhaps because the author, himself a nobleman and courtier, treated his own class so unsparingly. But the boldest step was taken by Lessing, in his *Emilia Galotti*, where the passions and intrigues of the higher classes are delineated with scathing bitterness. All these things were in perfect harmony with the restless spirit of the times; and men of a lower order of mind and talent thought they might do as much, or even more; so Grossmann, in six unsavoury dishes, served up to the malicious public all the tit-bits of his plebeian kitchen. A respectable man, Hofrat Reinhardt, was the major-domo at this unpleasant board, to the comfort and edification of all the guests. From this time forward stage villains were always chosen from the higher ranks; and the character must be a gentleman of the bedchamber, or at least

secretary, to be worthy of such distinction. All examples of extreme immorality were chosen from the highest officials and dignitaries in the court and civil list, and in this aristocratic society even magistrates themselves found a place as villains of the first water.

But as I fear I may already have been carried beyond the period with which I have at present to deal, I will return to myself, and to the impulse which drove me to occupy my leisure hours with the dramatic plans which I had devised in earlier days.

My enduring interest in Shakespeare's works had so widened my mind, that the narrow compass of the stage and the short time allotted to a representation, seemed to me quite insufficient for the requirements of a subject of importance. The life of the worthy Götz von Berlichingen, written by himself, impelled me to the historic mode of treatment; and my imagination found in it such wide scope, that it swept my dramatic form along with it, beyond all theatrical bounds, in the endeavour to approach more and more closely to the living reality. In the course of my work on this subject I had discussed it thoroughly with my sister, who was interested, heart and soul, in such matters. I reverted to the topic so often, without, however, setting definitely to work, that at last, in her impatient desire for my success, she urgently entreated me not to be always casting my words into space, but, once for all, to set down on paper the thoughts which were so vividly in my mind. Determined by this instigation, I began to write one morning, without having made any previous sketch or plan. I wrote the first scenes, and in the evening read them aloud to Cornelia. She highly approved of them, but only conditionally, since she doubted if I should ever continue them; and even openly expressed her want of faith in my perseverance. This was only a further incitement; I wrote the next day, and again the third. Our daily discussions increased my hopes, step by step the whole conception gained in vividness, the subject-matter I had already mastered. Thus I held to my work, without a break, keeping straight on my course, and looking neither backwards nor forwards, neither to the right nor to the left; and in about six weeks I had the pleasure of seeing the manuscript stitched. I showed

it to Merck, who spoke of it with appreciation and good sense. I sent it to Herder, who, on the contrary, expressed himself unkindly and severely, and did not miss the opportunity of writing some lampoons for the occasion, in which he bestowed on me several ridiculous epithets. This did not disturb me; rather I subjected my material to a rigid scrutiny. The die was now cast, and the only question was how best to play the game. I saw plainly that in this too I should get no further advice; and when, after some time I could look at my work as if it had proceeded from another hand, I was forced to admit that in my attempt to renounce unity of time and place, I had also infringed upon that higher unity which, in that case, should be all the more strictly observed. Since I had merely abandoned myself, without plan or sketch, to my imagination and to an inner impulse, I had not gone much astray in the beginning, and the first acts could fairly pass for what they were intended to be. In the following acts, however, and especially towards the end, I had been unconsciously carried away by a strange gust of passion. In my attempt to render Adelheid's charm, I had fallen in love with her myself,—involuntarily my pen was devoted to her alone,—interest in her fate gained the upper hand; and as, apart from this consideration, Götz, towards the end, is deprived of his power of action, and later only returns to take an unlucky part in the peasant war,* nothing was more natural than that a charming woman should supplant him in the mind of the author, who, casting off the fetters of art, had thought to try his powers in a new field. It did not take me long to discover this defect, or rather this excrescence, since the nature of my poetry always impelled me to unity. Putting aside my desire to reproduce Götz's life and ancient German customs, I now kept strictly my own work in view, trying to give it more and more historical and national purport, and to cancel what was fictitious or merely the work of passion. This was no mean sacrifice, as the inclination of the man had to yield to the conviction of the artist. Thus, for instance, I had taken great delight in introducing Adelheid into a gruesome nocturnal gipsy-scene, where the mere beauty of her appearance worked wonders. Closer

* The peasant war, answering to the *Jaquerie* in France.—*Trans.*

examination excluded her. The love affair between Franz and his gracious lady-love, which was developed in detail in the fourth and fifth acts, was much condensed, and only allowed to appear in its critical stages.

So, without altering anything in the first manuscript, which I still actually possess in its original shape, I determined to rewrite the whole, and set to work with such zeal, that in a few weeks I had before me an entirely remodelled piece. I worked at it all the more rapidly as I did not intend that this second draft should ever be printed, but merely looked upon it as a sort of preparatory exercise, which I might at some future date make the foundation of a new and more carefully considered treatment.

When I began to lay before Merck numerous proposals as to the way in which I intended to set about this task, he laughed at me, and asked what was the good of this perpetual writing and rewriting? The thing, he said, by this means, only changes its form, and seldom for the better; one should first see the effect of one thing, and then try something else. "Be at the hedge betimes, if you would dry your linen,"* he exclaimed, in the words of the proverb; hesitation and delay issue only in uncertainty. I replied by saying that I should dislike to offer to a bookseller a work on which I had bestowed so much affection, and perhaps receive a refusal as an answer; for how would they judge of a young, nameless, and, what was worse, an audacious author? My dread of the press had gradually vanished, and I should be glad to see my comedy *Die Mitschuldigen* printed, upon which I set some store, but I could find no publisher inclined in my favour.

This suddenly stirred my friend's practical mercantile instincts. By means of the *Frankfort Gazette*, he had already formed a connection with scholars and booksellers, and hence maintained that we ought ourselves to publish, at our own expense, this singular and certainly striking work, and that we should derive large profit from it. Like many others, he used often to reckon up the profits a bookseller could make, which in the case of many works was certainly great, especially if one left out of count how much they must lose on some kinds of publications and in other

* *Anglicé:* Make hay whilst the sun shines.—*Trans.*

commercial transactions. Finally, it was settled that I should supply the paper, and that he would see to the printing. So we went eagerly to work, and I was not a little pleased to see my wild dramatic sketch gradually appearing in clean proof-sheets; it really looked better than I myself expected. We finished the work, and it was sent off in many parcels. Before long there was no small stir on every side; for the play drew universal attention. But because, with our limited means, copies could not be supplied quickly enough in all directions, a pirated edition suddenly made its appearance. As, moreover, we could hope for no immediate return, at any rate in ready money, for the copies sent out, and as the allowance I received from my family was by no means a large one, I found myself at the very time when so much attention and even applause was being showered on me, extremely perplexed as to how I should pay for the very paper by means of which I had made the world acquainted with my talent. Merck, on the other hand, who was not so destitute of resources, entertained the best hopes that all would soon come right again; but I am not aware that this was ever the case.

Through the little pamphlets which I had published anonymously, I had already learned to know the critics and the public to my own cost; and I was thus pretty well prepared for praise and blame, especially as for many years I had been interested in observing how the authors were treated who had been the object of my special attention.

In the case of these, I could plainly see, even in the days of my uncertainty, how many groundless, one-sided, and arbitrary opinions were recklessly hurled at them. Now the same thing befell me, and if I had not had convictions of my own, I might indeed have been bewildered by the contradictory opinions of men of education. Thus, for instance, in the *German Mercury* there was a diffuse, well-meant criticism written by some narrow-minded man. I could not agree with him in his strictures,—still less when he took upon himself to explain how the matter should have been dealt with. It was therefore highly gratifying to me, immediately afterwards, to come across a lucid exposition by Wieland, who in general opposed the critic, and took my

part against him. However, the first review was also in print; and in this I saw an example of the mental dullness prevalent among well-informed and cultivated men. What, then, was to be hoped from the public at large!

I was not long to enjoy the pleasure of talking over such things with Merck, and thus gaining further light on them, for the enlightened Landgravine of Hesse-Darmstadt took him in her suite on her journey to Petersburg. The detailed letters which he wrote to me gave me a further insight into the ways of the world, and they appealed to me all the more as the descriptions were written by a known and friendly hand. Yet his departure left me very solitary for a long time, and deprived me, just at this important epoch, of his enlightening sympathy, which I then so much needed.

Just as a man embraces the determination to become a soldier and go to the wars, and courageously resolves to bear danger and difficulties as well as to endure wounds and pain, and even death, but at the same time never actually realizes the particular occasions in which those vaguely anticipated evils may come upon him as an extremely unpleasant surprise,—so it is with everyone who ventures into the world, and especially with an author; and so it was with me. As the public in general is more interested in the subject-matter than in the treatment of it, it was generally the subject of my plays which drew the sympathy of my younger readers. They thought they could see in them a banner, under whose guidance they might find a vent for all the wildness and crudeness of their youthful impulses, and it was the most able of them, men who had already entertained similar purposes, who were thus carried away. I still possess a letter—I do not know to whom addressed—from Bürger, a great and in many respects unique man, which may serve as important evidence of the effect and excitement produced by the publication of the piece. On the other side, sober-minded men blamed me for painting club-law in such favourable colours, and even attributed to me a desire to see those disorderly times restored again. Others took me for a man of profound learning, and wished me to publish a new annotated edition of Götz's original narrative;—a task for which I felt by no means fitted, although I allowed my name to be put on the title-page of

the new edition. Because I had selected the best blooms in the wide field of his life, they took me for a careful gardener. However, this learning and profound knowledge of mine were much disputed by others. A respected business man quite unexpectedly paid me a visit. I felt highly honoured, especially as he opened the conversation with praises of my *Götz von Berlichingen*, and of my thorough insight into German history, but I was nevertheless astonished when I discovered that he had really come for the sole purpose of informing me that Götz von Berlichingen was no brother-in-law to Franz von Sickingen, and that therefore, by introducing this matrimonial alliance, I had committed a grave historical error. I tried to excuse myself by the statement that Götz himself calls him so, but was met by the reply, that this is a form of expression which only denotes an intimate and friendly relationship, just as in modern times we call postilions "brothers-in-law," * without being bound to them by any family tie. I thanked him as well as I could for this information, and only regretted that the error could not now be remedied. He echoed my regret and exhorted me most kindly to a further study of the German history and constitution, and offered me his library, of which I afterwards made good use.

But the drollest event of the sort which occurred to me was the visit of a bookseller, who, with cheerful liberality, requested a dozen plays of the kind, promising to pay well for them. How amused we were at this offer may be imagined; and yet, in fact, he was not so very far in the wrong, for I was already secretly occupied in studying the chief events preceding and following this turning-point in German history, and in working them up in the same spirit —a laudable design, which, like many others, was frustrated by the rapid flight of time.

This play, however, had not been the author's sole occupation, for while it was being composed, written, rewritten, printed, and circulated, other ideas and plans were stirring in his mind. Those which allowed of dramatic treatment had so far the precedence that they were oftenest thought over and brought nearer to execution; but at the

* It is a German peculiarity to apply the word "Schwager" (brother-in-law) in this way.

same time he gradually came to clothe his thoughts in a new form which is not usually classed as drama, but yet has a great affinity with it. This transition was chiefly brought about by the author's propensity to turn even soliloquy into dialogue.

Having always spent his most pleasant hours in society, he devised the following plan for changing even solitary thought into social conversation :—When he was alone, he would call up before his mind any person of his acquaintance; then entreat him to sit down, walk up and down beside him, or remain standing before him, and discourse with him on the subject he had in his mind. His friend would answer as occasion required, or by the usual gestures signify his approval or dissent;—and in such gestures every man has his individual traits. The speaker then continued to develop further those subjects which seemed to please his guest, or to limit and define more closely those of which he disapproved; and, finally, would be polite enough even to yield his point. The strangest thing about it was, that he never selected persons of his intimate acquaintance, but only those whom he seldom saw, and some even who lived in distant parts of the world, and with whom he had only come into passing contact. They were, however, chiefly persons more receptive than communicative by nature, who were ready to take an open-minded interest in the things which fall within their range of vision, though he occasionally summoned dissentient spirits to these dialectic exercises. Persons of both sexes, of every age and rank, took their share in these discussions, and were invariably pleasant and obliging, since he only conversed on subjects which were intelligible and agreeable to them. Yet many would have thought it strange indeed, could they have learned how often they were summoned to these imaginary conversations, seeing that many of them would hardly have consented to a real one.

It is evident how nearly akin such a mental dialogue is to written correspondence; only that in the latter we see the confidence we have bestowed, reciprocated, while in the former, we create one for ourselves, new, ever-changing, and unreciprocated. So when the author felt an impulse to describe that satiety of life felt by men, even when they are

not driven to it by misfortune, he naturally hit at once upon the plan of expressing himself in letters; for all gloom is the child and pupil of solitude—whoever resigns himself to it flies all opposition, and what can be more opposed to his state of mind than the cheerfulness of society? The enjoyment in life felt by others is to him a painful reproach; and thus, those very influences which should charm him out of himself, throw him back to brood upon his misery. If he gives any expression to his feelings, it will be by letters; for a written effusion, whether bright or gloomy, has at the time of writing to face no opposition, while an answer containing contrary arguments gives the solitary soul cause and opportunity for hardening and confirming himself in his melancholy mood. The letters of Werther, written in this spirit, have so manifold a charm, precisely because their various contents were first talked over with several individuals in such imaginary dialogues, and only later in the process of composition itself were made to appear as if directed to one single friend and sympathizer. It would be hardly advisable to say more on the mode of treatment adopted in a little book which has been so much discussed, but, with respect to the contents, something may yet be added.

This loathing of life has both physical and moral causes; the former we will leave to the investigation of the physician, the latter to that of the moralist, and in this well-worn matter, only consider the main point, where the phenomenon is most clearly revealed. All comfort in life is based upon a regular recurrence of external phenomena. The change of day and night, of the seasons, of flowers and fruits, and all other recurring pleasures that come to us, that we may and should enjoy them—these are the main springs of our earthly life. The more open we are to these enjoyments, the happier we are; but if these changing phenomena unfold themselves before us and we take no interest in them, if we are insensible to such fair solicitations, then comes on the sorest evil, the heaviest disease—we regard life as a loathsome burden. It is said of an Englishman, that he hanged himself that he might no longer have to dress and undress himself every day. I once knew a worthy gardener, whose work was the superintendence

of a large park, who once cried out with vexation, "Shall I always see these rain clouds moving from west to east?" It is even told of one of our greatest men, that it irked him to see the returning green of spring, and that he wished for the sake of variety, it might for once be red. These are really the symptoms of weariness of life, which not infrequently results in suicide, and which, in self-absorbed, reflective men, was more frequent than one would imagine.

Nothing occasions this weariness more than the recurrence of the passion of love. First love, it is rightly said, is the only one deserving of the name, for second love, by its very existence, destroys the highest meaning of love. That conception of the eternal and infinite, which should elevate and support it, is destroyed, and it appears as transient as every other intermittent phenomenon. And the conflict between the sensual and the moral, which, in this complicated civilization sunders the feelings of love and desire, is the cause of an exaggeration which can lead to no good.

Moreover, a young man soon perceives in others, if not in himself, that there are changing phases in the moral world as well as in the seasons of the year. The condescension of the great, the favour of the strong, the encouragement of the influential, the attachment of the multitude, the love of individuals—all have their vicissitudes, and we can no more hold them fast than we could the sun, the moon, and the stars. And yet these are not mere workings of nature; they escape us either by our own or by another's fault, by chance or skill; yet change they do, and we are never sure of them.

But what most pains a sensitive youth is the unceasing recurrence of our faults; for it takes us long to learn that while we cultivate our virtues, we are nurturing our faults at the same time. The former rest upon the latter as upon their root, and the latter send forth underground ramifications as strong and as various as any of those which the former send forth into the open light of day. Further, as we generally practise our virtues by a conscious exercise of will, whereas we are unconsciously surprised by our faults, the former seldom procure us any pleasure, while the latter constantly bring with them trouble and pain. Here lies the

knotty point in self-knowledge, one which makes it all but impossible. If we add to all this young and feverish blood, an imagination on which isolated facts worked with benumbing force, and, above all, the uncertain vicissitudes of the hour, it is not to be wondered at if the impatient sufferer strove to free himself from such a strait.

However, such gloomy reflections, which lead those who yield to them along paths which have no turning, could not have developed so decidedly in the minds of our German youth, had not an outward stimulus incited and encouraged these morbid tendencies. Such a stimulus they found in English literature, especially in its poetry, for its great beauties are bound up with a grave melancholy, which is easily caught by those who love to read it. The intellectual Briton, from his youth up, sees himself surrounded by a world of stirring interest, which stimulates all his powers; he perceives, sooner or later, that he must gather all his wits together if he hopes to come to an understanding with it. How many of their poets have in their youth led a loose and riotous life, and soon found themselves justified in complaining of the vanity of earthly things? How many of them have tried their fortune in worldly affairs, have filled principal or subordinate posts, in parliament, at court, in the ministry, or in an embassy, have taken an active part in internal disorders and changes of constitutions and government, only to experience, if not in their own case, at any rate in that of friends and patrons, grievous rather than happy consequences! How many have been banished, imprisoned, or have suffered in their property!

Simply to be a spectator of such great events inspires seriousness; and to what can such serious thought lead us if not to the contemplation of the transitoriness and worthlessness of all earthly things? The German, too, is of a serious turn, and therefore he found English poetry not only greatly to his taste, but, as it sprang from a loftier level, even awe-inspiring. It reveals a strong and able intellect, well-schooled in the ways of the world, a deep and tender heart, a firm will, a passionate energy,—the very noblest qualities to be admired in a man of education and talent; but all this put together does not make a poet. True poetry is that

which, like a worldly gospel, can by its inner serenity and outward calm free us from the earthly burdens which press upon us. Like an air-balloon, it lifts us, together with the ballast which we bear, into higher regions, where the confused mazes of the world lie spread out before us as in a bird's-eye view. The gayest and the most serious works have the same aim of tempering both pain and pleasure by their felicitous and skilful presentment. Let us consider, only from this point of view, the majority of English poems, most of them moral and didactic, and on the average they will show us nothing but a gloomy weariness of life. Not only Young's *Night Thoughts*, where this theme in particular is worked out, but even the other contemplative poems, stray, before one is aware of it, into this dismal region, where the understanding is presented with a problem which it cannot solve, since here even religion, such religion at least as it is able to construct, refuses its help. Whole volumes might be compiled to serve as a commentary to this frightful text—

> "Then old Age and Experience, hand in hand,
> Lead him to death, and make him understand,
> After a search so painful and so long,
> That all his life he has been in the wrong."

What further helps to make English poets accomplished misanthropes, and diffuses over their writings that unpleasant sense of universal antagonism, is the fact that all of them, owing to their many national divisions, are forced to devote themselves for the best part, if not for the whole of their lives, to one party or another. Such a writer cannot praise and extol the members of his party, nor the cause to which he belongs, since, if he did, he would only excite envy and hostility, so he exercises his talent in slandering his opponents to the best of his ability, and in adding as much point and venom as he can to his satirical weapons. When this is done by both parties, the social life which lies between them is destroyed and wholly annihilated, so that a great, sensible and energetic nation appears to us, to use the mildest terms, merely as a spectacle of folly and madness. Even their love poems deal with mournful subjects. Here a deserted girl is dying, there

a faithful lover is drowned, or is devoured by a shark before his hasty strokes can bring him to the side of his beloved; and a poet like Gray needs only to sit down in a churchyard, and harp upon the well-known strings, to instantly gather round him a company of the friends of melancholy. Milton in his *Allegro* must first drive away gloom in vehement verse, before he can attain a temperate glow of pleasure; and even the cheerful Goldsmith loses himself in elegiac sentiments, when in his *Deserted Village* he draws us a picture, as sad as it is charming, of a lost Paradise which his *Traveller* wanders over the whole earth to find again.

I have no doubt that bright works and cheerful poems can be brought forward to contradict what I have said, but the greater number, and the best of them, certainly belong to the older period; and more recent works belonging to this category have the same satirical and bitter tendency, and treat women especially with contempt.

However that may be, it was such serious poems, so detrimental to all human energies, as those we have just referred to, that constituted our favourite reading, some seeking, in accordance with their dispositions, gentle elegiac melancholy, others heavy, oppressive, all-renouncing despair. Strangely enough, Shakespeare, our father and guide, who knows so well how to diffuse pure cheerfulness around him, only strengthened our feelings of discontent. Hamlet and his soliloquies were spectres which haunted all youthful minds. Each of us loved to commit to memory and recite the principal passages, and everybody fancied he had a right to be just as melancholy as the Prince of Denmark, though he had seen no ghost, and had no royal father to avenge.

But that a perfectly suitable environment might not be wanting to all this melancholy, Ossian had drawn us by his charm even to the *Ultima Thule*, where on a gray and boundless heath, wandering among projecting, moss-grown tomb-stones, we watched the grass around us swaying in a ghostly wind, and the lowering, cloudy sky above us. It was not till the moon rose that the Caledonian night was turned to day; departed heroes, faded maidens, hovered round us, until at last we really thought we saw the spirit of Loda in all its fearful reality.

In such an atmosphere, with such surrounding influences, with tastes and studies of this kind, tortured by unsatisfied passions, with no outward inducements to important activities, with the sole prospect of persisting in a dull, spiritless, commonplace life, we became—in gloomy wantonness—attached to the idea, that we could at all events quit life at pleasure, when we could bear it no longer, and found in this a miserable stay against the insults and ennui of our daily existence. This feeling was so general, that *Werther* produced its great effect precisely because it struck a corresponding chord in every heart, presenting in clear and concrete form a picture of the inner workings of a morbid youthful delusion. How accurately the English understood this form of wretchedness is shown by the few significant lines, written before *Werther* appeared—

> "To griefs congenial prone,
> More wounds than nature gave he knew,
> While misery's form his fancy drew
> In dark ideal hues and horrors not its own."

Suicide is an incident in human life which, however much disputed and discussed, demands the sympathy of every man, and in every age must be dealt with anew. Montesquieu grants his heroes and great men the right of killing themselves as they think fit, since he says that it must be free to everyone to close the fifth act of his tragedy when he pleases. But here it is not a question of those who have led an active and distinguished life, who have sacrificed their days for a great empire, or for the cause of freedom, and cannot be blamed if they hope to pursue in another world the idea which inspires them, as soon as this idea has vanished from the earth. We are here concerned with those whose life is embittered in the most peaceful circumstances by want of action and by the exaggerated demands they make upon themselves. Since I myself was in this predicament, and best know the pain I suffered in it, and the exertion it cost me to free myself from it, I will not try to hide the reflections which I then made, with much deliberation, on the various kinds of death a man might choose.

There is something so unnatural in the attempt made by any man to tear himself from himself, and not only to injure,

but to destroy himself, that he generally has recourse to mechanical devices for carrying out his design. When Ajax falls upon his sword, it is the weight of his body which renders him this last service. When the warrior exacts an oath of his shieldbearer not to let him fall into the hands of the enemy, it is still an external force which he secures, only a moral instead of a physical one. Women seek to cool their despair in water, and, to take the extreme instance of such mechanical aids, fire-arms ensure swift action with the least exertion. Hanging is repellent, because it is an ignoble death. It is more likely to occur in England, because there, from youth up, it is common to see many hanged without the punishment being exactly dishonourable. By poison, by opening the veins, the aim is to leave life slowly; and that most refined, rapid, and painless death by the sting of an adder, was worthy of a queen, who had passed her life in splendours and delights. But all these are external aids, enemies with which man forms an alliance against himself.

When I came to consider all these means, and to follow them out in history, I found that amongst all those who killed themselves, no one perpetrated the deed with such grandeur or freedom of soul, as the Emperor Otho. This man, defeated as a general, but by no means reduced to extremities, resolved to quit the world for the benefit of the empire, which, in a sense, already belonged to him, and for the sake of sparing many thousand lives. He has a cheerful supper with his friends, and the next mornng it is found that he has stabbed himself to the heart with his dagger. This singular deed seemed to me worthy of imitation; and I was convinced that no one who could not in this imitate Otho, had a right to take his own life. By this conviction, I freed myself not only from the intention but also from the whim of suicide, which in those glorious times of peace had managed to creep in amongst an indolent youth. Among a considerable collection of weapons, I possessed a handsome, well-polished dagger. This I laid every night by my bed, and before I extinguished the candle, I tried whether I could succeed in plunging the sharp point a couple of inches deep into my breast. Since I never could succeed, I at last laughed myself out of the notion, threw off all hypochondriacal fancies, and resolved to live.

But to be able to do this with serenity, I was obliged to translate into literary form and to clothe in words, all that I had felt, thought, and fancied on this important point. With this object in view I collected the scattered elements which had been at work in me the last few years; I called back to mind the cases which had most afflicted and tormented me; but failed in attaining any definite conception: I lacked an event, a plot in which to embody them.

Suddenly I heard the news of Jerusalem's death, and, on the heels of the general rumour, came the most accurate and circumstantial description of the whole occurrence: on the instant the plan of *Werther* was formed, and the whole drew together, and became a solid mass, just as water in a vessel, which is upon the point of freezing, is converted into hard ice by the most gentle shake. I was all the more anxious to hold fast this singular prize, to realize and carry out in all its parts a work of such important and varied contents, as I had once more become involved in a painful situation, which left me even less hope than any former one, and foreboded nothing but disappointment, if not ill-feeling.

It is always a misfortune to enter upon new relationships to which one has not been inured; we are often against our will lured into a false sympathy, the incompleteness of such positions troubles us, and yet we see no means either of completing or of renouncing them.

Frau von La Roche had married her eldest daughter at Frankfort, and often came to visit her, but could not reconcile herself to the position which she herself had chosen. Instead of endeavouring either to feel at home in it or else to make some change in it, she indulged in such lamentations, as forced one to think that her daughter was unhappy; although, as she wanted for nothing, and her husband denied her nothing, it was difficult to see exactly in what her unhappiness consisted. In the meanwhile I was well received in the house, and came into contact with the whole circle, consisting of those who had either contributed to bring about the marriage, or else hoped it would result in the happiness of both. The Dean of St. Leonard's, Dumeitz, became communicative and at last friendly with me. He was the

first Catholic clergyman with whom I had come into close contact, and thanks to his clear-sightedness, I was able to gain from him pleasurable and satisfactory explanations of the faith, usages, and external and internal workings of this oldest of churches. I have a distinct memory too of an elegant, though middle-aged lady, named Servières. I formed the acquaintance of the Alessina-Schweizer, and other families, came into friendly relations with the sons, which lasted for some time, and so all at once found myself on intimate terms with a circle of strangers, in whose occupations, pleasures, and even religious exercises I was induced, nay, compelled to take part. My former relations to the young wife, which, properly speaking, were only those of a brother to a sister, continued after marriage; we were of corresponding ages; I was the only one in the whole circle in whom she heard an echo of those intellectual tones to which she had been accustomed from her youth. We lived on together in a child-like confidence, and although there was no note of passion in our intercourse, it was still painful enough, because she too could not reconcile herself to her new circumstances, and, although richly endowed with fortune's gifts, saw herself transplanted from the pleasant valley of Ehrenbreitstein and a happy childhood to the gloomy surroundings of a mercantile house, and forced to act as mother to several step-children. So I found myself hemmed in amid new family relations, without any real share or participation in their life. As long as they were happy with one another, all went on smoothly enough; but most of the parties concerned turned to me in cases of vexation, and my lively sympathy generally did more harm than good. This situation soon became insupportable; all the disgust of life which usually springs from such unsatisfactory relationships, seemed to weigh on me with double and threefold weight, and a new and powerful resolution was once more needed to free me from it.

Jerusalem's death, which was occasioned by his unhappy attachment to the wife of a friend, shook me out of my dream, and I not only saw visibly before me what had befallen both him and me, but something similar which happened to me at the time stirred me too to passionate emotion, and hence I was naturally led to breathe into the

work I had in hand all that warmth which makes no distinction between the imaginary and the actual. I completely isolated myself, prohibited the visits of my friends, and put aside all interests that did not immediately bear on the subject of my work. On the other hand, I gathered together everything that had any bearing on my design, going over the more recent events of my life of which I had as yet made no practical use. It was under such circumstances, and after such long and secret preparation that I wrote *Werther* in four weeks, with no previous written scheme either of the whole or of individual parts.

The manuscript, now finished, lay before me in a rough draft, with few corrections and alterations. It was made up into a book at once, for the binding is to a written work of much the same use as the frame is to a picture; it is much easier to see whether there is really anything in it. I had written the little volume, almost unconsciously, like a somnambulist, and was myself astonished at it when I went through it, in order to alter and improve it. Thinking, however, that after some time, when I could look at the work from a certain distance, many possible improvements might occur to me, I gave it to my younger friends to read, and the effect produced on them was all the greater, as, contrary to my usual custom, I had told no one of it, nor revealed my plan beforehand. Yet here again it was the subject-matter which really produced the effect, and in this respect they were in a frame of mind precisely the reverse of my own; for by this composition, more than by any other, I had freed myself from that stormy element, in which, by my own fault and that of others, by a mode of life at once designed and accidental, of set purpose and by heedless precipitation, by obstinacy and pliability, I had been so violently tossed to and fro. I felt as if I had made a general confession, and was once more free and happy, and justified in beginning a new life.

The old recipe had this time done me excellent service. But while I myself felt eased and enlightened by having turned fact into fiction, my friends were demoralized by my work, for they thought that fiction should be turned into fact, that the hero ought to be imitated, and that the least one could do was to shoot oneself. The effect

produced upon a few afterwards extended to the general public, and this little book, which had been so beneficial to me, was decried as extremely injurious.

But all the evils and misery it is supposed to have caused were nearly prevented by an accident, for soon after its production it ran the risk of being destroyed. This is what happened :—Merck had recently returned from St. Petersburg; I had had very little talk with him, because he was always busy, and only gave him a very general idea of the *Werther* which lay so near my heart. One day he called upon me, and as he did not seem very talkative, I asked him to listen to me. He sat down on the sofa, and I began to read the story letter by letter. After I had read for some time, without eliciting any sign of approval, I laid still more stress upon the pathos,—but what were my feelings when, at a pause which I made, he struck a terrible blow at my hopes with a calm, "Yes! very pretty," and withdrew without any further remark. I was beside myself, for though I found pleasure in my works, I was at first quite unable to pass judgment on them. I now quite believed that I had made a mistake in subject, tone, and style—all of which were doubtful—and had produced something quite impossible. Had a fire been at hand, I should have burnt the work at once; but I again plucked up courage, and passed some painful days, until he at last assured me in confidence, that at that moment he had been in the most frightful position possible to any man. He had, therefore, neither seen nor heard anything, and did not even know what the manuscript was about. In the meanwhile his trouble had been set right, as far as possible, and Merck, when his energies were awake, was a man to bear any calamity, even the most stupendous; his humour returned, only it had grown even more bitter than before. He harshly condemned my design of re-writing *Werther*, and wished to see it printed just as it was. A fair copy was made, which did not long remain on my hands, for on the very day on which my sister was married to Georg Schlosser, and while the house was full of rejoicing at the event, a letter from Weygand, of Leipzig, arrived, in which he asked me for a manuscript. I looked on such a coincidence as a favourable omen. I sent off *Werther*, and was well

satisfied to find that the remuneration I received for it was not entirely swallowed up by the debts I had been forced to contract on account of *Götz von Berlichingen*.

The effect this little book produced was enormous, chiefly because it exactly hit the temper of the times. For just as a little match will blow up a vast mine, so the force of the explosion which followed my publication was due to the fact that the youth of our generation had already undermined itself; and the shock was so great, because all extravagant demands, unsatisfied passions, and imaginary wrongs, found in it a violent and sudden vent. It cannot be expected of the public that it should receive a work of art in an artistic spirit. As a matter of fact, it was only the subject, the material, that was considered, as I had already found to be the case among my own friends; while at the same time the old prejudice appeared, that the dignity of a printed book required it to have a moral aim. But a true picture of life has none. It neither approves nor censures, but developes feelings and actions in their natural consequences, and thereby enlightens and instructs.

Of the reviews I took little notice. I had completely washed my hands of the matter, and those good folks might now try what they could make of it. But my friends did not fail to collect such criticisms, and being more initiated into my views, to make merry over them. The *Joys of Young Werther*, which Nicolai produced, gave us occasion for many a jest. This otherwise excellent, meritorious, and well-informed man had already begun to depreciate and oppose everything that did not accord with his own way of thinking, which, in his narrow-mindedness, he held to be the only correct one. So he must needs try his strength against me too, and his pamphlet was soon in our hands. A very delicate vignette, by Chodowiecki, gave me much delight; as at the time I admired this artist extravagantly. The bungled medley itself was cut of that rough homespun, which the human understanding takes such pains to make sufficiently coarse for the members of its own family. Blind to the fact that here no intervention was possible, that Werther's youthful bloom is represented as cankered from the very outset, Nicolai allows my treatment to pass up

to the two hundred and fourteenth page, and then, when the distracted man is preparing to take the fatal step, this acute psychological physician contrives to palm off upon his patient a pistol, loaded with chickens' blood, which results in a repulsive spectacle, but happily no mischief. Lotte marries Werther, and the whole affair ends to general satisfaction.

So much I can recall from memory, for I never saw the book again. I cut out the vignette, and put it away among my favourite engravings. Then, by way of taking a quiet and innocent revenge, I composed a short burlesque poem, "Nicolai at Werther's grave," which, however, is best omitted here. Here again my predilection showed itself for giving everything a dramatic form. I wrote a prose dialogue between Lotte and Werther of a fairly amusing character; Werther complains bitterly that his deliverance by the help of chickens' blood has turned out so badly. His life is saved, it is true, but the shot has blinded him. He is now in despair at being her husband, and yet not able to see her; for the sight of her whole person would be much dearer to him than all those pretty details which he can ascertain by touch. Lotte, in accordance with her character, is not particularly well pleased with a blind husband, and this gives an opportunity of abusing Nicolai pretty roundly, for interfering unasked in other people's affairs. The whole was composed in a good-natured spirit, and depicted with frank foreboding Nicolai's unfortunate and conceited disposition to meddle with things beyond his compass, a tendency which caused great annoyance both to himself and others, and which, eventually, in spite of his undoubted merits, entirely undermined his literary reputation. The original of this *jeu d'esprit* was never copied, and has been lost sight of for years. I had a particular weakness for this little production. The pure and ardent devotion of the two young lovers was rather heightened than diminished by the tragi-comic situation in which they thus became involved. A tone of tender feeling pervaded the whole; and even my adversary was not treated ill-naturedly, but only humorously. However, I did not make the book itself speak quite so politely, but let it express itself as follows, in imitation of an old rhyme:—

"By that conceited man—by *him*
I'm dangerous declar'd,
The heavy man, who cannot swim,
Is by the water scar'd!
That Berlin pack, priest-ridden lot—
Their ban I do not heed;
And those who understand me not
Should better learn to read."

Well fortified in anticipation against all that might be alleged against *Werther*, I was not much troubled by these attacks, numerous though they were; but I was quite unprepared for the intolerable torment provided for me by sympathizers and well-wishers. These, instead of making polite comments on my book just as it stood, wished to know, one and all, how much of it was really true; at which I grew very angry, and generally gave uncourteous answers. To satisfy them, I should have had to pull to pieces and destroy the form of a work on which I had spent so much thought, trying to give poetical unity to its many various elements; and in such a process its essential parts, if they survived at all, must have lost their unity and coherence. However, upon closer consideration, I could hardly blame the public for its inquisitiveness. Jerusalem's fate had excited great attention. An educated, gentle, blameless youth, the son of one of our ablest authors and theologians, in good health and circumstances, had suddenly, and without known cause, destroyed himself. Every one wanted to know how such a thing was possible: the mention of an unfortunate love affair roused general excitement among younger minds, whilst references to petty annoyances, which he had had to suffer in higher circles, stirred the interest of the middle classes; indeed every one was anxious to learn further particulars. Now *Werther* was thought to be an exact delineation of the life and character of that young man. Descriptions of place and personality both tallied, and the narrative was so natural, that everyone felt fully informed and satisfied. But closer examination revealed so much that did not fit, that the seekers after truth found themselves in an insufferable quandary, since all critical investigation necessarily gave rise to a hundred doubts. But they could not get at the real gist of the matter: all of

my own life and sufferings which I had worked into the book was undecipherable, because, young and unobserved, I had gone on my own way in obscurity if not in secret.

While working at my book I had not forgotten the good fortune of the artist who had been allowed the opportunity of composing a Venus from the study of various different beauties. Accordingly I took the liberty of using the appearance and qualities of several pretty girls as models for my Lotte, although the chief characteristics were all taken from the one I loved best. The inquisitive public was therefore able to discover resemblances to various ladies; and even the ladies themselves were not indifferent to the honour of being thought the true original. But these several Lottes caused me infinite trouble, because everyone who saw me seemed determined to know where the real one actually resided. I endeavoured to save myself, like Nathan * with the three rings, by an expedient, which, though it might have suited more distinguished people, was not satisfactory either to the orthodox or the reading public. I hoped after a time to be freed from such tormenting inquiries, but they pursued me through my whole life. On my travels I tried to escape them, by assuming an *incognito*, but even this remedy was, to my disappointment, unavailing, and thus even if the author of this little volume had wrought harm or mischief by it, he was sufficiently, I may say disproportionately, punished by such unavoidable importunities.

This kind of infliction taught me only too clearly that authors and their readers are separated by an immense gulf, of which, happily, neither of them have any conception. I had long ago realized the uselessness of all prefaces; for the more pains a writer takes to explain his views, the more confusion he creates. Besides, an author may preface his works as elaborately as he will, the public will always go on demanding of him precisely what he has endeavoured to disclaim. Another kindred peculiarity of the reading public, which strikes us as remarkably absurd, especially in those who commit their criticisms to print, was soon to fall under my notice. They are possessed by the delusion that an

* "Nathan the wise," in Lessing's play *Nathan der Weise*, founded on Boccaccio's tale of the rings.—*Trans.*

author, by producing anything, becomes their debtor; and that he always falls short of what they wished and expected of him, even though before they had seen his work, they had not the least idea that anything of the kind existed, or was even possible. Independently of all this, it was now my greatest fortune or misfortune, that everyone wished to make the acquaintance of this strange young author, who had stepped forward so unexpectedly and so boldly. They wanted to see him, to speak to him, to hear something from him, even if at a distance; and he was compelled to live in a turmoil of society, sometimes pleasant, sometimes disagreeable, but always distracting. For he had begun upon a number of works, sufficient to occupy him for some years, if he could have kept to them with his old fervour; but he was drawn out of the calm, the twilight, the obscurity, which can alone favour pure creation, into the clamour of daylight, where we lose ourselves in others, and are led astray, alike by sympathy and coldness, by praise and blame, because these outward influences never accord with the phase of our inner development, and therefore, as they cannot help, must necessarily injure us.

Yet more than by all the distractions of the day, the author was kept from the elaboration and completion of greater works by the taste then prevalent in this society for *dramatizing* everything of importance which occurred in actual life. What that technical expression (for such it was in our literary circle) really meant, shall here be explained. Under the stimulus of our genial social gatherings, we grew accustomed to split up into short, extemporized fragments all the materials which we had formerly been wont to collect with a view to compositions of greater length. A single simple incident, a happily *naive* or even silly word, a blunder, a paradox, a clever remark, personal idiosyncrasies or habits, even a peculiar look, and anything else which might occur in a varied and bustling life—took the form of a dialogue, a catechism, a stirring scene, or a drama,—sometimes in prose, frequently in verse.

This practice, carried on with talented enthusiasm, strengthened in us this genuinely poetic attitude of mind. We accepted objects, events, persons, as they were, either individually or in their manifold relations, our only endeavour

was to comprehend them clearly, and represent them vividly. Every favourable or unfavourable criticism was to pass in living form before the eyes of the spectator. These productions might be termed animated epigrams, which, though not purporting to cut or wound, were yet rich in point and forcefulness. The *Jahrmarktsfest* (Fair-festival) is an epigram of this kind, or rather a collection of such epigrams. All the characters there introduced are meant for actual living members of that society, or at least for persons connected with it, and in some degree known to it; but the solution of the riddle was unguessed by the greater number; all laughed and few knew that their own marked peculiarities were the substance of the jest. The prologue to Bahrdt's *Neueste Offenbarungen* (Newest Revelations) may be looked upon as a specimen of another kind; the shortest pieces are to be found among my miscellaneous poems, a great many have been destroyed or lost, and some that still exist do not admit of being published. Those which appeared in print only increased the excitement of the public and their curiosity about the author; those which were handed about in manuscript entertained our immediate circle, which was continually increasing. Doctor Bahrdt, then at Giessen, paid me a visit, to all appearance courteous and confiding; he laughed over the prologue, and seemed anxious to enter into friendly relations. But we young people still continued to omit no opportunity at our social gatherings of jesting, in a malicious vein, over the peculiarities which we had remarked in others, and successfully reproduced.

If it was by no means displeasing to the young author to be stared at as a literary meteor, he nevertheless sought, with glad modesty, to testify his esteem for the great men of his country, among whom JUSTUS MÖSER deservedly claims especial mention, before all others. The little essays on political subjects written by this incomparable man, had been printed some years before in the *Osnabrücker Intelligenzblätter*, and were made known to me by Herder, who overlooked no work of value, and particularly no printed work, that appeared in his time. Möser's daughter, Frau von Voigts, had undertaken the task of collecting these scattered papers. We had scarcely patience enough to

wait for their publication, and I entered into communication with her, to assure her with sincere interest, that the essays, originally addressed only to a limited circle, would be useful and beneficial everywhere from the nature both of their form and contents. She and her father received these assurances from a stranger, whose name was not unknown to them, with great satisfaction, since they were thus relieved for the time being from the anxiety they had felt on this score.

What is most remarkable and commendable in these little essays, which, composed as they are, with a single motive, form together a perfect whole, is the very intimate knowledge they display of the whole civil state of man. We here see a social system resting upon the past, and still in vigorous existence. On the one hand there is a firm adherence to tradition, on the other a tendency to unrest and change which cannot be prevented. Here alarm is felt at a useful innovation, there pleasure in what is new, although it be useless, or even injurious. With what freedom from prejudice the author explains the relative position of the different classes as well as the mutual relationships of cities, towns, and villages! We learn what are their prerogatives, together with the legal grounds on which they rest; we are told where the main capital of the state is invested, and what interest it yields. We are shown, on the one hand, property and its advantages, on the other, taxes and disadvantages of various kinds; and are finally introduced to the numerous branches of industry; and in all this a contrast is drawn between past and present times.

Osnabrück, as a member of the Hanseatic League, enjoyed, we are told, in its earlier days an extensive and active commerce. Its position, in those times, was a remarkably fine one; it could receive the produce of the country, and was not too far removed from the sea to co-operate in the work of transport. But now, in later times, it lies far in the interior, and has gradually been shut out from the sea trade which has receded from it. The cause of this change is explained to us from many points of view. Mention is made of the conflict between England and the coasts, and that between the ports and the interior; the great advantages of living on the sea-board are here set forth,

and deliberate plans proposed for enabling the inhabitants of the interior to obtain similar advantages. We next learn much of trades and handicrafts, and how these have been outstripped by manufactures, and undermined by shop-keeping; the decline is shown to be the result of various causes, and this result, in its turn, the cause of a further decline, in an endless and apparently inevitable circle; yet such is our author's statesmanship and such his lucidity of exposition that we almost fancy we can discover a way of escape. Throughout he displays the clearest insight into the minutest details. His suggestions and advice are no airy fabrics, though they are often impracticable; and that is why he calls his collection "patriotic fancies," although everything in it has a basis of reality and possibility.

But as everything in public life depends upon the conditions of domestic life, this especially engages his attention. The changes in manners and customs, dress, diet, domestic life, and education, are subjects with which he deals, now earnestly, now in a lighter vein. We should have to catalogue every process in the civil and social world, to exhaust the list of subjects which he discusses. And his mode of treatment is admirable. A thoroughly capable man of business discourses to the people, in weekly papers, on the undertakings and operations of a wise and beneficent government, in the hope of setting these matters before them in their true light. And this is not done in a dry, didactic manner, but in very various forms which might be called poetical, and which must certainly be considered rhetorical in the best sense of the word. He always rises above his subject, and understands how to give a bright aspect to the most serious subjects; now half-concealed in one disguise or another, now speaking in his own person, always thorough and exhaustive,—at the same time always good-humoured, more or less ironical, able, honest, well-meaning, sometimes blunt and vehement;—and all this in such marvellous proportion that we cannot sufficiently admire the wit, intellect, facility, skill, taste, and character of the author. In his choice of subjects of general utility, his deep insight, wide views, happy treatment, profound yet cheerful humour, I know no one to whom he can be more fitly compared than Franklin.

Such a man produced an infinite effect upon us, and greatly influenced a youthful generation which demanded solid worth and was in a fit mood to appreciate it. We thought we might indeed be capable of the style of his exposition; but who could hope to make himself master of such a wealth of matter, and to handle the most intractable subjects with so much ease?

But it is our dearest, most cherished illusion — one which we cannot resign, however much pain it may cause us through life—to hope that we may possibly appropriate and even reproduce and exhibit as our own, what we prize and honour in others.

FOURTEENTH BOOK

ALONGSIDE the new movement which was spreading among the public, there arose another of greater importance perhaps to the author, as it took place in his immediate circle.

His early friends who had read in manuscript those literary works which were now creating so much sensation, looked upon them consequently almost as their own, and gloried in a success which they had been bold enough to predict. Their number was increased by new adherents, especially by such as felt conscious of creative power, or were eager to evoke it and cultivate it in themselves.

Lenz was one of the most active and most eccentric amongst the former. I have already sketched the outward appearance of this remarkable man, and touched affectionately on his humorous talent. I will now speak of his character, in its manifestations rather than in its real essence, because it would be impossible to follow him through the mazy course of his life, and to give in these pages a detailed account of his peculiarities.

We have already explained that love of self-torture which in the absence of all outward grievances, had now become fashionable, and which worked most havoc in the noblest minds. The thoughts which would merely inflict a passing stab on ordinary men, unused to self-analysis, and would soon be banished from their minds, were carefully noted by men of finer mould, observed and recorded in books, letters, and diaries. Now, however, men united the strictest moral demands on themselves and others with an excessive negligence in action; and the presumption arising from this incomplete self-knowledge led them into strange and even vicious habits. But these painful struggles in self-analysis were justified by the rise of empirical pyschology which, while not exactly prepared to pronounce

everything that produces inward disquiet to be wicked and reprehensible, still could not give it unconditional approval, and so gave rise to an unceasing and inappeasable conflict. In the maintenance of this conflict, Lenz surpassed all other idlers and dabblers who were busily burrowing into their own souls, and thus he suffered from that general disease of the times, which should have been cured by the publication of *Werther;* but a personal peculiarity distinguished him from all the rest. While they were undeniably frank and upright souls, he had a decided inclination to intrigue, and to intrigue for its own sake, without having any distinct object in view, that is, any reasonable, attainable, personal object. On the contrary, it was always his habit to set himself some farcical aim, and by this means he kept himself constantly amused. Thus all his life long he remained a liar in his imagination ; his love, as well as his hate, were imaginary ; he dealt arbitrarily with his thoughts and feelings so that he might never lack occupation. He made use of the most perverted means to give reality to his sympathies and antipathies, and continually himself destroyed his own work. Thus he never benefited any whom he loved, nor injured any whom he hated. In general he seemed to sin only that he might be able to punish himself, and to intrigue for no other purpose than to graft a new fiction upon an old one.

His talent, in which tenderness, pathos, and subtlety rivalled each other, sprang from a real depth, from an inexhaustible creative power, but was thoroughly morbid with all its beauty. Such qualities are precisely the most difficult to judge. It is impossible to overlook the nobler features of his works—a vein of gentle tenderness steals through fragments of caricature so eccentric and so absurd, that it is difficult to excuse them, even for the sake of humour as thorough-going and unassuming as his, and in a man of such genuine comic talent as he was. His days were made up of mere trifles, to which his nimble fancy could always give a meaning, and thanks to his good memory, he could all the more easily fritter his time away, as the hours which he employed in reading were always fruitful, and helped to enrich his own original mode of thought with materials of the most varied nature.

He had been sent to Strasburg to accompany some

Livonian noblemen, and a more unfortunate choice of a Mentor could not have been made. The elder baron went back for a time to his native country, leaving behind him a lady to whom he was devotedly attached. In order to keep the second brother, who was paying court to the same lady, as well as other lovers, at a distance, and to preserve this precious treasure for his absent friend, Lenz determined either to feign, or, possibly, actually to entertain, a passion for this fair lady. He carried this plan out with the most obstinate adherence to the ideal he had formed of her, without allowing himself to realize that he, no less than the others, merely served her for pastime and amusement. So much the better for him! For him, too, it was nothing but a jest which could only be kept up by her meeting him in the same spirit; now attracting, now repelling him; now encouraging, and now slighting him. We may be sure that when he came to his senses again, as he occasionally did, he would, with great delight, have congratulated himself on such a find.

For the rest, like his pupils, he lived for the most part with officers of the garrison, and to this circumstance are probably due the strange notions he afterwards brought out in his comedy *Die Soldaten* (The Soldiers). Meanwhile, this early acquaintance with military men produced in him the peculiar fancy, that he was himself a great judge in military matters. And he actually did, by degrees, study the subject in detail with such effect, that some years afterwards he prepared a long memorial to the French Minister of War, from which he hoped for great results. The faults of the department were certainly adequately pointed out, but the remedies suggested were ridiculous and impracticable. However, he cherished a conviction that he might by this means gain great influence at court, and was anything but grateful to those of his friends who, partly by persuasion, and partly by active opposition, compelled him to suppress, and finally to burn, this fantastic work, when he had gone as far as to copy it, enclose it with a letter, and formally address it.

I had been his confidant first by word of mouth, and afterwards by letter, in all the shifting and perplexing mazes of his intercourse with the lady above mentioned. The poetry which he could infuse into the commonest incidents often

astonished me, so that I urged him to employ his talents in turning the essence of this protracted adventure to account, by basing on it a short romance. But that was not in his line; he only felt in his element when he was exhausting himself on trivial details, spinning out endless threads which led to nothing. Perhaps at some future time, it will be possible to supplement these introductory remarks by some account of his life up to the time when he finally lost his reason. At present I will confine myself to what is immediately connected with the subject in hand.

No sooner had Götz von Berlichingen appeared than Lenz sent me a lengthy disquisition written on small scribbling paper, such as he commonly used, leaving no margin, either at the top, or the bottom, or at the sides. It was entitled, *Über unsere Ehe* (On our Marriage), and were it still in existence, might enlighten us now much more than it did me at the time, seeing that I was still in the dark as to his life and character. The leading purpose of this long manuscript was to compare my talent with his own; he would sometimes seem to rank himself below me, and again represent himself as my equal; but it was all done so deftly and so humorously that I was quite open to receive the view he intended to convey, all the more so as I did, in fact, rate his gifts very highly, and was always urging him to desist from his aimless rambling, to concentrate his powers, and to use his inborn creative genius to artistic purpose. I gave a friendly response to this mark of his confidence, and in compliance with that eager desire which he expressed for further intimacy (as the whimsical title sufficiently indicates), from that time forward I kept him informed of every new work or plan of work on which I was engaged. In return he sent me a succession of his manuscripts: *Der Hofmeister* (The Private Tutor), *Der neue Menoza* (The New Menoza), *Die Soldaten* (The Soldiers), Imitations of Plautus, and the translation from the English which I have already mentioned as forming the supplement to his Remarks on the Drama.

In my perusal of his laconic preface to this translation, I was struck by his speaking in such a way as to convey the idea that this essay, containing a vehement attack upon the regular stage, had been read many years before to a

gathering of literary men, and, consequently, at a time when Götz was not yet written. That there should have been among Lenz's acquaintances at Strasburg a literary circle of which I was ignorant seemed somewhat doubtful; however, I let it pass, and soon found publishers for this and his other writings, without having the least suspicion that he had selected me as the chief object of his fantastic hatred, and as the mark of a strange, capricious persecution.

For the sake of clearness in the sequel, I will just mention in passing a good fellow, who, though of no extraordinary gifts, was yet one of our number. He was called WAGNER, and was first a member of our Strasburg society and then of the one at Frankfort—a man by no means lacking in ability, talent, and education. He gave evidence of an aspiring mind, and was therefore welcomed among us. He attached himself warmly to me, and as I made no secret of my plans, I showed to him as well as others my sketch of *Faust*, especially the Gretchen episode. He caught at the idea and used it for a tragedy, *Die Kindesmörderin* (The Infanticide). It was the first time that anyone had stolen from me any of my plans. It vexed me, though I bore him no ill will on that account. Since then I have often enough had to endure such depredations and piracy of forecasted plans, and considering my dilatoriness and my habit of gossiping about the many things that I was continually planning and imagining, I had no right to complain.

If orators and poets love to make use of contrasts on account of their effectiveness, even at the expense of seeking them out sometimes in remote regions, the present writer ought to be delighted to find ready to hand such a decided contrast as that presented by the two men, Klinger and Lenz. They were contemporaries, and had worked together in their early years. But Lenz, like a transient meteor, shot but for a moment across the horizon of German literature, and vanished suddenly, leaving no trace behind. KLINGER, on the contrary, has maintained his position up to the present time as an author of influence, and an active man of business. But I will not now pursue this self-evident comparison any further; nor will it be necessary to speak at great length of Klinger himself, since the great work he

has done, and the influence he has exerted, are no hidden facts, but are still held in universal memory and esteem.

Klinger's appearance, for I always prefer to speak of this first, was very prepossessing. Nature had given him a tall, slender, well-built figure, and regular features. He was careful of his appearance, always dressed neatly, and might justly have passed for the best-looking member of our little society. His manner was neither forward nor repellant, and when his feelings were not stirred, mild and gentle.

We love young girls for what they are, but young men for what they promise to be, and that is how I became Klinger's friend as soon as I made his acquaintance. He attracted us by his pure good-nature, and won our confidence by his unmistakeable firmness of character. From his earliest days everything had strengthened in him a serious bent. He and a sister, as handsome and estimable as himself, had had to provide for a mother who, in her widowhood, had need of such children for her support. He had made himself what he was, so that no one could blame him if a strain of proud independence was apparent in his bearing. Decided natural talents, such as are common to all well-endowed men, a ready power of apprehension, an excellent memory, and great fluency of speech, he possessed in a high degree; but he seemed to esteem all these far less than those qualities of firmness and perseverance which, though also native to him, had been confirmed by circumstances.

To a young man of such a character, the works of Rousseau could not fail to appeal. *Émile* was his manual and guide, and its sentiments which exercised an influence on all educated men were peculiarly fruitful with him, and influenced him more than others. For he too was a child of nature,—he too had worked his way upwards. What others were bidden to cast from them, he had never possessed; social relations from which they were to free themselves, had never fettered him. He might therefore stand for one of the purest disciples of that gospel of nature, and in view of his own persevering efforts and his conduct as man and son, might well exclaim, "All as it leaves the hand of nature is good!" But the conclusion, "All is corrupted by the hand of man!" was also forced upon him by adverse

experiences. It was not with himself that he had to struggle, but beyond and outside himself with the conventional world, from whose fetters the Citizen of Geneva designed to set us free. And since the circumstances of his youth had often rendered this struggle both hard and painful, he had been forced back upon himself too violently to be able to attain to a thoroughly serene and happy development. On the contrary, as he had had to fight his way against an opposing world, a trait of bitterness had crept into his character, which he afterwards sometimes fed and cherished, but for the most part resisted and conquered.

His works, as far as I am able to recall them, reveal a strong understanding, an upright mind, an active imagination, a ready perception of the varieties of human nature, and a characteristic representation of generic differences. His girls and boys are frank and charming, his youths ardent, his men straightforward and intelligent; such characters as are depicted in an unfavourable light are not overdrawn; he is not wanting in cheerfulness and good humour, in wit and happy inspirations; allegories and symbols are at his command; he can entertain and please, and the enjoyment would be still purer if he did not here and there mar his gay and pointed wit, both for himself and us, by a strain of bitterness. Yet this it is that makes him what he is. The infinite variety which exists in the various types of men and writers, is due to the fact that we each of us waver in our theory between knowledge and error, and in our practice between creation and destruction.

Klinger should be classed with those who have fitted themselves for their life in the world out of their own resources, their own powers of mind and soul. This development was common to a large number of men, who were wont, in their mutual intercourse, to express themselves vigorously and strikingly in an intelligible language, having its source in universal nature and in popular usage. Hence all pedantic forms of speech were excessively distasteful to them, especially if they had degenerated into mere phrases by being dissociated from their living origin and so lost all their first fresh significance. Such men almost invariably wage war against new opinions, views, and systems, as well as against new events and rising men

of mark who announce or carry out great innovations. They are however not so much to blame on this account; their opposition is not unnatural when they see the source of their own being and culture threatened with destruction.

This adherence of a strong energetic character to its own views demands all the more respect when it has been maintained intact throughout a life spent in the world and in business, and when a mode of dealing with present events, which to many might seem rough and even arbitrary, has led, by its opportune employment, most surely to the desired end. This was the case with Klinger; a stranger to any kind of pliability (never a virtue of the native of a Free City) he had nevertheless risen, steadily, and honourably, to posts of great importance, had managed to maintain his position, and as he advanced in the esteem and favour of his noblest patrons, never forgot his old friends, or the path by which he had risen. Indeed, through all degrees of absence and separation, he pertinaciously struggled to preserve an absolute constancy of remembrance, and it is certainly worthy of remark that in his coat of arms, though adorned by the badges of many orders, like another Willigis,* he did not disdain to perpetuate the tokens of his early life.

It was not long before I made the acquaintance of LAVATER. He had been much struck by passages from my "Letter of a Pastor to his Colleague," for much of it perfectly coincided with his own views. Thanks to his unwearying activity we were soon engaged in a lively correspondence. At the time it commenced he was making preparations for his larger work on Physiognomy,—the introduction to which had already been laid before the public. He entreated everyone to send him drawings and silhouettes, and especially representations of Christ; and, although I could do little for him in this way, he nevertheless insisted on my sending him a sketch of the Saviour such as I imagined him. Such impossible demands gave rise to jests of many kinds, for I had no other way of defending myself against his eccentricities than by bringing my own into play.

The number of those who had no faith in Physiognomy,

* Archbishop of Mainz (975–1011), the son of a wheelwright, had a wheel inserted in his coat of arms.

or, at least, regarded it as uncertain and deceptive, was very large; and several who were not unfriendly to Lavater felt an irresistible longing to put him to the test, and, if possible, play a trick upon him. He had ordered of a respectable painter in Frankfort the profiles of several well known persons. Lavater's agent ventured upon the jest of sending Bahrdt's portrait and passing it off as mine, which soon brought back a merry but thundering epistle, full of expletives of all sorts and asseverations that this was not my picture,—together with everything else that Lavater would naturally find to say on such an occasion in confirmation of the doctrine of Physiognomy. He was better satisfied with my true likeness, which was afterwards sent, but even here the antagonism into which he constantly fell both with painters and their subjects was very evident. The former could never be exact or faithful enough for him; the latter, whatever excellences they might have, always fell too far short of the ideal he entertained of men and humanity to prevent his being somewhat repelled by the special traits which constitute the personality of the individual.

The conception of humanity which he had evolved out of his own consciousness and nature, was so completely at one with the vivid conception of Christ which filled his heart, that it was impossible for him to understand how a man could live and breathe and yet not be a Christian. My own relation to the Christian religion was a matter of thought and feeling, and I had not the slightest conception of that physical affinity to which Lavater inclined. I was, therefore, vexed by the importunity, with which a man of so much heart and intellect attacked me, as well as Mendelssohn and others, maintaining that we must either become Christians with him, Christians of his sort, or else must bring him over to our own way of thinking, and convince him of those same truths in which we had found rest. This demand, so directly opposed to that liberal, humanitarian spirit, to which I was tending more and more, had no good effect on me. All unsuccessful attempts at conversion leave him who has been selected for a proselyte stubborn and obdurate, and this was especially the case with me when Lavater at last pronounced the harsh alternative—"Either Christian or Atheist!" I thereupon declared that if he would not

leave me my own Christianity as I had hitherto cherished it, I was quite ready to decide for Atheism, particularly as I saw that nobody knew precisely what was meant by either.

This correspondence, vehement though it was, did not disturb the good terms we were on. Lavater had an incredible amount of patience, pertinacity, and endurance; he was confident in his theory, and determined to propagate his convictions in the world; he was willing to effect by waiting and by gentle means what he could not accomplish by force. In short, he belonged to the few fortunate men whose calling perfectly harmonizes with their inner vocation, and whose training has proceeded uninterruptedly from their early to their later life, thus giving a natural development to their faculties. Born with the most delicate moral susceptibilities, he had chosen the clerical profession. He received the usual education, and displayed considerable ability, but showed no inclination to pursue his studies to the extent of real scholarship. For he too, though born so long before us, had, like ourselves, been caught by the spirit of Liberty and Nature which was characteristic of the time, and which whispered flatteringly in every ear, "You have possibilities and latent powers enough within yourself, without much outward aid; all depends upon their proper cultivation." The obligation of a clergyman to exercise an influence which the world calls moral, but which from a higher standpoint is religious, fully coincided with his mental tendencies. His marked impulse, even as a youth, was to impart to others, and to excite in them, his own sentiments of justice and piety, and his favourite occupation was the observation of himself and of his fellow-men. The former was facilitated, if not forced upon him, by his tenderness of conscience; the latter by his keen eye for what went on around him. Still, he was not born for contemplation; and properly speaking, the gift of presenting ideas was not his. He felt himself rather impelled by all his powers to work and action; I have never known anyone more unceasingly active. But because our inner moral nature is inseparably bound up with external conditions, whether we belong to a family, a class, a guild, a city, or a state, he was obliged, in his desire to influence others, to come into contact with all these institutions, and to set them in motion.

Hence arose many a collision, many a complication, especially as the commonwealth of which he was by birth a member enjoyed, within precise and accurately defined limits, admirable hereditary freedom. The republican from his boyhood is accustomed to think for himself and to converse on public affairs. In the first bloom of youth he sees the time draw near when, as a member of a free corporation, he will have a vote to give or to withhold. If he wishes to form a just and independent judgment, he must, first of all, be convinced of the worth of his fellow citizens; he must learn to know them; he must inquire into their sentiments and their capacities; and thus, while he aims at leading others, he becomes familiar with his own heart.

Such was Lavater's early training, and this business of life seems to have occupied him more than the study of languages and that analytic criticism, which is not only bound up with it, but is its basis and its aim. In later years, when his attainments and his views had attained such boundless scope, he used frequently to assert, both in jest and earnest, that he was not a learned man. It is precisely to this want of deep and solid learning, that we must ascribe his tenacious adherence to the letter, not only of the Bible, but even of the Bible version, finding in it sufficient nourishment and assistance for all his wants and aims.

Very soon, however, this sphere of action within the limits of a guild and corporation became too narrow and too slow in its workings for his energetic nature. It is not hard for a youth to be upright, and a pure conscience revolts from the wrong doing of which it is still innocent. The oppressions of a bailiff were evident to the eyes of the citizens, but it was by no means easy to bring him to justice. Lavater, in company with a friend of his, anonymously threatened the guilty bailiff. The matter became notorious, and had to be investigated. The criminal was punished, but the instigators of this act of justice were blamed if not abused. In a well ordered state justice even must not be brought about by unjust means.

On a tour which Lavater now made through Germany, he came into contact with educated and upright men; this only served to confirm his former thoughts and convictions, and on his return home he worked with ever growing freedom

and self-reliance. Great and noble by nature, he was conscious of possessing a lofty conception of humanity, and whatever in his experience contradicted such a conception, with all the undeniable defects which keep everyone from perfection, was to be reconciled by his idea of a Divine Being who, in the fulness of time, condescended to assume our human nature in order to restore it fully to its earlier image.

So much by way of preface about the early years of this eminent man; and next follows the pleasant task of describing our meeting and personal intercourse. Soon after the beginning of our correspondence he announced to me and to others, that in the course of a voyage up the Rhine which he purposed to take shortly, he would soon visit Frankfort. This announcement caused the greatest excitement; all were curious to see so remarkable a man; many hoped for advancement from him in moral and religious culture; the sceptics looked forward to distinguishing themselves by adducing grave objections; the conceited felt sure of entangling and confounding him by the arguments they had prepared,—in short, there was all the favour and disfavour which awaits a distinguished man who has a mind to meddle with this motley world.

Our first meeting was a cordial one; we embraced in the most friendly way, and I found him just what I expected from the many portraits of him I had seen. I saw before me, in full life and activity, an individual of unique distinction, whose like the world has not seen and will not see again. Lavater, on the contrary, betrayed at once by some singular ejaculations, that I was not what he had expected. Thereupon, I assured him, with that realistic spirit which was natural to me and had been increased by cultivation, that since God and nature had been pleased to make me in that fashion we must rest content with it. The most important of the points on which we had been least able to agree in our letters, became at once subjects of conversation, but we had not time to discuss them thoroughly, while something happened to me that I had never before experienced.

For our part whenever we wished to speak of serious

matters touching the soul or heart, we were wont to withdraw from the crowd, and even from all society, because among so many modes of thought, and different degrees of culture, it is difficult to be understood even by the few. But it was not so with Lavater, he liked to extend his influence as far as possible, and was never at ease except in a crowd, where he could find scope for his wonderful talent for instruction and entertainment, based on his great knowledge of physiognomy. He had the power of discriminating persons and minds, which enabled him to understand at once the mental state of all around him. And whenever his penetration was met by sincere confession, or true-hearted inquiry, he was able, from the abundance of his internal and external experience, to satisfy everyone with an appropriate answer. The deep tenderness of his look, the marked sweetness of his mouth, and even the honest Swiss accent which made itself heard through his High German, besides many other of his distinguishing features, immediately placed all whom he addressed entirely at their ease. Even the slight stoop in his carriage, and slightly hollow chest, contributed not a little to counterbalance in the eyes of the remainder of the company the weight of his commanding presence. Towards presumption and arrogance he could behave with tactful self-possession, for while seeming to yield he would suddenly bring forward some great and noble view, which could never have crossed the mind of his narrow-minded opponent, holding it before him like some great diamond shield, yet at the same time so skilfully moderating the light which flowed from it, that such men felt themselves instructed and convinced,—so long at least as they were in his presence. Perhaps with many the impression continued to operate long afterwards, for even conceited men may be good at heart; all that is necessary is to soften by gentle influences the hard shell which holds the fruitful kernel.

What caused him the greatest pain was the presence of persons whose outward ugliness must irrevocably stamp them as decided enemies of his theory of the significance of form. These usually displayed a considerable amount of common sense, and even superior gifts and talents, in vehement hostility and paltry attacks upon a doctrine

which appeared offensive to their self-love; for it was not easy to find any one so magnanimous as Socrates, who interpreted his faun-like exterior as a tribute to his acquired morality. To Lavater the hardness, the obduracy of such antagonists was horrible, and his opposition to them often passionate; just as the smelting fire must attack the resisting ore as troublesome and hostile.

Under such circumstances a confidential conversation, such as might apply to our own cases and experience, was not to be thought of; however I was much instructed by observing the manner in which he treated men,—instructed, I say, not improved by it, for my position was wholly different from his. For him who works with a moral purpose no effort is lost; his endeavour will put forth far more fruit than is shown in the parable of the Sower, with its all too moderate estimate. But he whose labours are artistic, fails utterly in every work which does not win recognition as a work of art. Hence my frequent impatience with my dear sympathizing readers, and my strong disinclination to come to an understanding with them. I now felt but too vividly the difference between the effectiveness of my labours and Lavater's. His influence prevailed, when he was present, mine, when I was absent. Everyone who was dissatisfied with him at a distance became his friend when they met, and everyone who, judging by my work, expected to find me gracious and attractive, was bitterly disappointed when he came in contact with a man of repellant coldness and reserve.

Merck, who had just come over from Darmstadt, played the part of Mephistopheles, making merry particularly over the importunities of the women. When he saw some of them closely examining the apartments which had been set apart for the prophet, and, above all, his bed-chamber, the wag observed that "the pious souls wished to see where they had laid the Lord." Yet he, as well as the others, was forced to submit and let himself be exorcised; for Lips, who accompanied Lavater, drew as complete and successful a portrait of him as he had done of other both important and unimportant men, who were to figure together in the great work on Physiognomy.

For myself, my intercourse with Lavater proved of great

moment and profit, for his pressing incitements to action set my calm, artistic, contemplative nature in motion, not, however, to any immediate advantage, because for the moment he only increased the distraction of mind which had already laid hold of me. Still, so many subjects were discussed between us, as to give rise to the most earnest desire on my part to prolong our intercourse. Accordingly I determined to accompany him if he went to Ems, when I hoped that, shut up in the carriage and cut off from the world, we might freely treat of those subjects which lay nearest to both our hearts.

Meanwhile I found the conversations between Lavater and Fräulein von Klettenberg exceedingly interesting and profitable. Here two firm Christians stood in contrast to each other, showing evidently how the same belief may take a different shape according to the sentiments of different persons. In those tolerant times it was repeated often enough that every man had his own religion and his own mode of worship. Although I did not exactly agree with this, yet, in the present instance, it was made evident to me that men and women need a different Saviour. Fräulein von Klettenberg looked towards hers as to a lover to whom one yields oneself without reserve, concentrating all joy and hope on him alone, and without doubt or hesitation confiding to him the destinies of life. Lavater, on the other hand, treated his as a friend, to be imitated lovingly and without envy, whose merits he recognized and valued, and whom, for that very reason, he strove to copy and even to equal. What a difference between these two tendencies, which represent in general the spiritual necessities of the two sexes! This may perhaps explain the fact that men of tender feelings have so often turned to the Mother of God as a paragon of female beauty and virtue, and like Sannazaro, have dedicated to her their lives and talents, only occasionally turning aside to play with the Divine Infant.

In what relations my two friends stood to each other, and how they felt towards each other, I gathered not only from conversations at which I was present, but also from confidences which both made to me in private. I could not entirely agree with either; for my Christ had also taken a form of his own, in accordance with my own views. But as

they would not allow mine to pass muster, I worried them with all sorts of paradoxes and exaggerations, and, when they got impatient, left them with a jest.

The struggle between faith and knowledge had not yet become the order of the day, but the two words and the ideas connected with them were brought forward from time to time, and true cynics maintained that one was as little to be relied on as the other. So I took delight in declaring in favour of both, yet even then failed to win my friends' assent. In matters of Faith, I said, everything depends on believing; the nature of the belief is perfectly indifferent. Faith is a profound sense of security for the present and future, and this assurance springs from confidence in a limitless, all-powerful, and inscrutable Being. The firmness of this confidence is the one great point; but our conception of this Being depends on our other faculties, or even on circumstances, and is a question of perfect indifference. Faith is a sacred vessel into which everyone is ready to pour his feelings, his understanding, his imagination, making the sacrifice as entire as he can. With Knowlege the exact opposite is the case. There the point is not whether we know, but what we know, how much we know, and how well we know it. Hence, Knowledge is open to dispute because it can be corrected, widened, and restricted. Knowledge begins with the particular, it is endless and irreducible to forms of sense, can never be apprehended in its entirety, or at least only as in a dream, and thus remains the exact opposite of Faith.

Half truths of this kind, and the errors which arise from them may be exciting and entertaining, in the garb of poetry, but in life they disturb and confuse conversation. For this reason I was glad to leave Lavater to the company of all those who looked to be edified by him and with him, and was fully compensated for this deprivation by the journey we took together to Ems. We were favoured by lovely summer weather. Lavater was gay and altogether delightful. For in spite of his religious and moral turn of mind, he was by no means of an anxious disposition, but responded readily when outward events moved those around him to be gay and cheerful. He was sympathetic, clever, witty, and liked the same qualities in others, provided that they were kept

within the bounds which his delicate sense of propriety prescribed. If any one ventured to go beyond them he would clap him on the back, and by a hearty "*Bisch guet!*" ("Be good") call the rash man back to good behaviour. From this journey I derived both instruction and inspiration, of a kind, however, which contributed more to my knowledge of his character than to the government and development of my own. At Ems I saw him surrounded immediately by men of all sorts and conditions, and went back to Frankfort, because my trifling concerns were in such a state that I could scarcely afford to be absent from them.

But I was not destined to find rest and quiet again so speedily. BASEDOW now appeared to attract and influence me on another side. It would be scarcely possible to find a more decided contrast than that presented by these two men. A single glance at Basedow revealed the difference. Lavater's features lay open to the observer; Basedow's, on the contrary, were crowded together, and drawn inward as it were. Lavater's eyes, beneath heavy eyelids, spoke of a frank and pious nature; Basedow's, deep-set, small, black, keen, gleamed from under bristling brows, while, on the contrary, Lavater's forehead displayed two arches of the softest brown hair. Basedow's strong, harsh voice, quick, sharp expressions, a certain sarcastic laugh, his habit of rapidly changing the conversation, and his other peculiarities, were the exact opposite of the qualities and demeanour by which Lavater had been wont to spoil us. Basedow too was much sought after in Frankfort, and his great talents were admired, but he was not the man either to edify souls or to lead them. His sole aim was to improve the cultivation of the wide field he had marked out for himself, so that humanity might afterwards, in taking up its dwelling there, find greater comfort and more natural liberty; but his hasty pursuit of this end was all too ruthless.

I could not altogether acquiesce in his plans or even get a clear understanding of his views. I was of course pleased with his desire to make all instruction living and natural; that the dead languages should be practised on subjects of living interest, appeared to me a laudable ambition, and I gladly acknowledged all that side of his project that tended to promote activity and a fresher

view of life. But what displeased me was that in his elementary treatise the illustrations were even more distracting in their arrangement than the subjects they treated of. For in the actual world only compatible things are brought together, and for that reason, in spite of all variety and apparent confusion, the world still preserves a certain regularity in all its parts. Basedow's elementary treatise, on the contrary, throws it into utter confusion, inasmuch as things which in the world would never appear combined, are here classed together for the sake of the association of ideas; and consequently, the book lacks even those palpable methodical advantages which we must acknowledge in the similar works by Amos Comenius.

But Basedow's conduct was far stranger and more incomprehensible than his doctrine. The purpose of his journey was, by personal influence to interest the public in his philanthropic enterprise, and, indeed, to open not only hearts but purses. He had the gift of speaking grandly and convincingly of his scheme, and every one was ready to concede what he asserted. But he succeeded in a most inexplicable way in hurting the feelings of the very men whose assistance he wished to gain; what is worse, he outraged them unnecessarily, through his inability to keep back his opinions and odd fancies on religious subjects. Here, too, Basedow was the very opposite of Lavater. While the latter received the Bible literally, and looked upon the whole of its contents as being word for word binding, and applicable at the present day, the former was stirred by restless promptings to renovate everything, and to remodel both the doctrines and the ceremonies of the church in conformity with his own fantastic notions. But he was most pitiless and most imprudent in his attacks on those conceptions which are not immediately derived from the Bible, but from its interpretation;—all those expressions, technical philosophical terms, or concrete similes, by which Councils and Fathers of the church have sought to explain the inexpressible, or to confute heretical doctrine. With harsh and unwarrantable aggressiveness, and before all alike, he declared himself the sworn enemy of the Trinity, and would never desist from arguing against this universally accepted mystery. I, too, had to suffer a good deal from

this kind of entertainment in our private conversations, and was compelled again and again to listen to his tirades on *Hypostasis*, *Ousia*, and *Prosopon*. To meet all these I had recourse to the weapons of paradox, and, soaring to yet wilder flights of opinion than his own, dared to oppose his rash assertions with something rasher still. This was a fresh stimulus to my mind, and as Basedow was much more extensively read, and had more skill in the fencing tricks of argument than a follower of nature like myself, I had always to exert myself in proportion to the importance of the points which were discussed between us.

Such a splendid opportunity for exercising, if not for enlightening my mind, could not be allowed to end too soon; so I prevailed on my father and friends to manage the most pressing part of my affairs, and set off again from Frankfort, this time in Basedow's company. But what a difference I felt when I recalled the grace of mind and spirit which breathed from Lavater! Pure himself, he created around him an atmosphere of purity. At his side one felt simple and sensitive as a girl in the desire to avoid hurting his feelings. Basedow, on the contrary, altogether self-absorbed, paid little heed to his surroundings. His ceaseless smoking of wretched tobacco was in itself extremely disagreeable, especially as his pipe was no sooner out, than he produced a dirtily prepared kind of tinder, which easily took fire, but had a most horrid stench, and every time poisoned the air insufferably with the first whiffs. I called this preparation "The Basedovian Smellfungus," (*Stinkschwamm*) and declared that it ought to be introduced into Natural History under this name. This amused him greatly, and to my disgust he minutely explained the hated preparation, taking a malicious pleasure in my aversion to it. It was one of the deep rooted, disagreeable peculiarities of this admirably gifted man that he was fond of teasing, and would go out of his way to goad the most innocent and unconcerned. He could never see anyone at peace, but would provoke him in his hoarse voice, with a mocking gibe, or put him to confusion by an unexpected question, laughing bitterly when he had gained his end; yet he was pleased when the object of his jests was quick enough to turn and retort upon him.

All this only increased my longing for Lavater. He, too, seemed rejoiced when he saw me again, and confided to me much that he had learned, especially in reference to the various characters of his fellow guests, among whom he had already succeeded in making many friends and disciples. For my part I found here several old acquaintances, and in those whom I had not seen for many years, I began to notice what we are slow to see in youth, namely, that men grow old and women change. The company increased in numbers every day. There was an immense amount of dancing, and, as in the two chief hydros people were thrown into pretty close contact, this familiarity led to many a practical joke. Once I disguised myself as a village clergyman, while a well-known friend assumed the *rôle* of his wife; by our excessive politeness, we succeeded in making ourselves burdensome to the distinguished company, and in thus exciting their good humour. There was no lack of serenades by evening, night and morning, and we juniors got but little sleep.

To make up for these dissipations, I always passed a part of the night with Basedow. He never went to bed, but dictated continuously. Occasionally he would throw himself on the couch and doze; while his amanuensis sat quietly, pen in hand, ready to continue his work when it should please the only half awakened author once again to give his thoughts free course. All this went on in a close unventilated room, filled with the fumes of tobacco and of that odious tinder. Whenever I was not engaged for a dance, I hurried up to Basedow, who was ready at a moment's notice to speak and dispute on any question; and when, after a time, I flew back again to the ball-room, before I had well closed the door behind me, he would resume the dictation of his treatise as composedly as if nothing had disturbed him.

We also took many excursions into the neighbourhood together, visiting the châteaux, especially those belonging to ladies of rank, who were everywhere more inclined than the men to receive anyone with any intellectual or clerical pretensions. In Nassau we found a large company assembled at the house of Frau von Stein, a most estimable lady, who enjoyed universal respect. Frau von Laroche was also

present, as well as a considerable number of young ladies and children. Here Lavater was put to many a physiognomical test, which consisted mainly in our trying to palm upon him accidental results of education as natural qualities, but his eye was too sure to be deceived. I, too, was called upon as usual to maintain the truth of the Sorrows of Werther, and to name Lotte's place of residence, a desire which I declined to gratify, and that not in the politest manner. On the other hand I collected the children around me to tell them wonderful stories, all made up out of well known originals, and here I had the great advantage of feeling certain that no one in my circle of hearers would ask me with importunity, how much of it was truth and how much fiction.

Basedow affirmed that the only thing necessary was a better education of youth, and to promote this end he called upon the higher and wealthy classes for considerable contributions. But hardly had his reasoning and his impassioned eloquence excited, if not quite won over, the sympathy of his hearers, when the evil anti-trinitarian spirit came upon him, so that without the least sense of where he was, he broke forth into the wildest utterances, which in his own opinion were highly religious, but according to the convictions of those around him highly blasphemous. We all did our best to stem the evil; Lavater, by gentle seriousness, I, by jesting attempts to change the subject, and the ladies by entertaining walks, but harmony could not be restored. A Christian conversation, such as had been expected from the presence of Lavater, a discourse on education, such as had been anticipated from Basedow, and a sentimental disquisition, which I was expected to contribute—all were disturbed and destroyed at a blow. On our way home, Lavater reproached him, but I inflicted a humorous punishment on him. The weather was warm, and the tobacco-smoke had perhaps contributed to the dryness of Basedow's palate; he was longing for a glass of beer, and seeing a tavern at a distance on the road, eagerly ordered the coachman to stop there. But just as he was driving up to the door, I called out to him loudly and imperiously, "Go on!" Basedow, taken by surprise, could hardly bring his husky voice to utter

a command to the contrary. I urged the coachman more vehemently, and he obeyed me. Basedow cursed me, and was ready to fall upon me with his fists, but I replied to him with the greatest composure, "Father, be quiet! You ought to thank me. Luckily you didn't see the beer label! It was two intersecting triangles. Now the sight of one triangle seems to drive you mad, so if you had set eyes on two, we should have had to get you a strait jacket." This joke threw him into a fit of immoderate laughter, in the intervals of which he scolded and cursed me, while Lavater exercised his patience on both the young fool and the old one.

When in the middle of July, Lavater prepared to take his leave, Basedow thought it advisable to join him, and I had grown so accustomed to the society of these rare spirits that I could not bring myself to give it up. We had a delightful journey down the Lahn; refreshing alike to heart and mind. At the sight of an old ruined castle, I wrote the song "*Hoch auf dem alten Turme steht*" (High on the ancient Turret stands), in Lips's Album, and it was well received; but I did my best to destroy the good impression, after my evil habit, by writing all kinds of doggrel rhymes and ridiculous nonsense on the succeeding pages. It was a joy to me to see our splendid Rhine once more, and the astonishment of those who had never before enjoyed this grand spectacle delighted me. We landed at Coblentz; wherever we went, the crowd was very great, and each one of us excited interest and curiosity. Basedow and I seemed to vie with each other in outrageous behaviour. Lavater showed his usual sense and wisdom, only he could not conceal his inner convictions, and thus, with the best of intentions, was doomed to appear eccentric to all mediocre intellects.

I have preserved the memory of a wonderful dinner we had at an hotel in Coblentz, in some doggrel verses, which will, perhaps, appear with others of their kind in my next edition. I sat between Lavater and Basedow; the former was instructing a country parson on the mysteries of the Revelation of St. John, and the latter was in vain endeavouring to prove to an obstinate dancing-master, that baptism was an obsolete usage not adapted to our times.

As we were going on towards Cologne, I wrote in an album—

> "As if towards Emmaus bent,
> With fiery speed they flew;
> On right, on left, a prophet went,
> The worldling 'twixt the two."

Luckily this worldling had also a side which was open to heavenly influences, and which was about to be most unexpectedly and strangely touched. While in Ems I had rejoiced to hear that in Cologne we should find the brothers Jacobi, who with other eminent men had set out to meet and do honour to our two remarkable travellers. On my part, I hoped for forgiveness from them for sundry little incivilities which had originated in the uncivil spirit that Herder's acid humour had excited in us. The letters and poems in which Gleim and Georg Jacobi publicly delighted in each other, had given us material for all sorts of jests, and it had not occurred to us that it is just as selfish to inflict pain on those who are happy, as to pay excessive attention to one's self or to one's friends. This conduct had created some antagonism between the Upper and Lower Rhine, so slight, however, that mediation was easy, and the ladies were peculiarly fitted to undertake the office. Sophia Laroche had already given us a high idea of the excellences of the two brothers. Mademoiselle Fahlmer, who had come to Frankfort from Düsseldorf, and who was intimate with their circle, by her exquisite sympathies and unusual culture, testified to the worth of the society in which she had grown up. She gradually put us to shame by her patience with our harsh Upper German manner, and taught us forbearance by making us feel that we ourselves stood in need of it. Our sympathies were still further drawn towards them by the sterling qualities of Jacobi's younger sister, and by the cheerful spirit of Fritz Jacobi's wife. By the latter I was entirely captivated. Full of feeling, yet without a trace of sentimentality, gay and lively in her talk, she was a fine type of Dutch womanhood, and without any touch of sensuality, by her robust nature put one in mind of the women of Rubens. Both these ladies, in longer and shorter visits at Frankfort, had become intimate with my sister, and had helped to expand and enliven her severe, stiff,

and somewhat loveless nature. Thus even in Frankfort our hearts and minds had enjoyed a Düsseldorf and a Pempelfort.

Accordingly our first meeting in Cologne was both frank and confidential, for the good opinion of the ladies had not been without its influence at home. I was no longer treated, as hitherto on the journey, as the mere nebulous tail of the two great comets; everyone paid me considerable attention, and showed me abundant kindness, and seemed ready to receive the like from me in return. I was weary of my previous foolish and impertinent behaviour, which, indeed, had only been a cloak to hide my impatience at finding how little there was on this journey to satisfy the cravings of my heart and soul. So now my inmost feelings burst out in a torrent, and this is perhaps the reason why I recollect so little of individual events. The thoughts we have had, the pictures we have seen, can be called up again before the mind and the imagination; but the heart is not so complaisant; it will not repeat its agreeable emotions. And least of all are we able to recall moments of enthusiasm; they come upon us unprepared, and we yield to them unconsciously. For this reason, others, who observe us at such moments have a better and clearer insight into what passes within us, than we ourselves.

Religious conversations I had hitherto gently declined; I had not infrequently answered even sensible questions with harshness, because they seemed to me too narrow in comparison with what I sought. When anyone wished to force upon me his sentiments and opinions on my compositions, but especially when I was tormented with the demands of commonplace minds, and told authoritatively what I ought to have done or left undone, I lost all patience, and the conversation broke off, or crumbled to pieces, so that no one could possibly be left with a particularly good opinion of me. It would have been much more natural to me to be kind and friendly, but my feelings would not be hectored. They would only expand at the touch of a willing benevolence or be moved to surrender by sincere sympathy. One feeling which was very strong in me, and for which I could never find adequate expression, was a sense of the past and present as being one; a conception which infused a spectral element into the present. It is

expressed in many of my shorter and longer works, and always adapts itself well to poetry, though, whenever it sought directly to interpret itself through and in actual life, it must have appeared to everyone strange, inexplicable, perhaps gloomy.

Cologne was the place where the works of antiquity had such an incalculable effect upon me. The ruins of the Cathedral (for an unfinished work is like one destroyed) called up the emotions which I had been accustomed to feel in Strasburg. Artistic considerations were out of the question; on the one hand there was too much before me, on the other hand too little, and there was no one who could help me out of the labyrinth and show me what was actually accomplished and what only intended, what was reality and what forecast, what was built and what only designed, as our industrious, persevering friends are now ready to do. In company with others I did indeed admire its wonderful chapels and columns, but when alone I always lost myself in gloom in the contemplation of this vast edifice, thus checked in its creation while far from complete. Here, again, was another great idea never realized! It would seem, indeed, as if the whole purpose of architecture were only to convince us that many men, in a number of years, are not able to accomplish anything, and that in art and in action only that is achieved which, like Minerva, springs full-grown and armed from the head of its inventor.

At these moments, which oppressed more than they cheered my heart, I little thought what a sweet and tender experience was in store for me close at hand. I was persuaded to visit Jabach's house, and here all that I had been wont to imagine in my mind was visibly and actually presented to my sight. This family had probably long ago become extinct, but on the ground floor, opening upon a garden, we found everything unchanged. A pavement of ruddy-brown lozenge-shaped tiles, regularly laid, carved chairs with embroidered seats and backs, curiously inlaid tables, resting on heavy feet, metal chandeliers, an immense fireplace with its appropriate fire-irons, everything in harmony with those early times, and in the whole room nothing new, nothing belonging to the present but ourselves. But what more than all heightened and completed

the emotions thus strangely excited, was a large family picture over the fireplace. There sat the former wealthy owner of the house with his wife, surrounded by his children,—there they were in all the living freshness of yesterday, or rather of to-day, and yet all of them had passed away. These young, round-cheeked children had grown old, and but for this speaking likeness, not a trace of them would have remained. How I acted, how I demeaned myself, when overcome by these impressions I cannot say. The lowest depths of my human affections and poetic sensibilities were laid bare in the boundless stirring of my heart; all that was good and loving in my soul must have opened and broken forth. In that moment without further question or dispute, I gained for life the affection and confidence of those eminent men.

As a result of this union of soul and intellect, which called forth to the lips of each one of us all our innermost feelings, I offered to recite one or two of my newest and favourite ballads. "*Der König von Thule*" (The King of Thule), and "*Es war ein Bube frech genug*" (There was a lad bold enough *), made a great impression, and I spoke with all the more feeling as my poems were still knit closely to my heart and seldom crossed my lips. For the presence of those who I feared could not sympathize with my tender sensibility, cast a restraint upon me; and frequently, in the midst of a recitation, I have become confused and been unable to pick up the lost thread again. How often on that account have I been accused as obstinate, intractable, and whimsical!

Although poetic composition, just then, mainly occupied my time, and exactly suited my temperament, I still thought deeply on all kinds of subjects, so that I welcomed with delight that tendency of Jacobi, so original and so natural to him, to search out the unsearchable. Here we fell into no controversy, neither a Christian one, as with Lavater, nor a didactic one, as with Basedow. The thoughts which Jacobi imparted to me flowed straight from his heart. How profoundly he moved me when in unlimited confidence, he

* The title of the poem is "Der untreue Knabe" (The Faithless Boy), and in the first line of it, as published in Goethe's collected works, "Knabe" will be found instead of "Bube."—*Trans.*

revealed to me the most hidden longings of his soul! From so amazing a combination of mental wants, passions, and ideas, I could only gather undefined presentiments of what might, perhaps, afterwards grow clearer to me. Happily, I had already prepared my mind, if not yet fully cultivated it in this direction, by appropriating to some degree the thoughts and mental attitude of an extraordinary man, and though my study of him had been incomplete and hasty, I was yet already conscious of important influences flowing to me from this source. This mind, which had worked upon me thus decisively, and which was destined so deeply to affect my whole mode of thinking, was SPINOZA. After seeking through the world in vain, to find means of cultivation for my unusual nature, I at last fell upon the Ethics of this philosopher. It would be impossible for me to render an account of how much I drew from my perusal of the work itself, and of how much I myself read into it. Enough that I found in it a sedative for my passions, and that it seemed to open out for me a free and boundless view of both the sensible and the moral world. But what especially riveted me to him, was the utter disinterestedness which glowed in his every sentence. That wonderful sentiment, "He who truly loves God must not desire God to love him in return," together with all the preliminary propositions on which it rests, and all the consequences that follow from it, filled my whole mind. To be disinterested in everything, but most of all in love and friendship, was my highest desire, my maxim, and my practice, so that that subsequent daring saying of mine, "If I love thee what is that to thee?" was spoken straight from the heart. Moreover, it must not be forgotten here that the closest unions are those of opposites. Spinoza's reconciling calm was in striking contrast with my perturbing activity; his mathematical method was the direct opposite of my poetic mental and creative attitude, and that very precision which was thought ill-adapted to moral subjects, made me his enthusiastic disciple, his most decided worshipper. Mind and heart, understanding and sense, sought each other with an irresistible affinity, binding together the most divergent natures.

At this time, however, everything within me was still fermenting and seething in the first action and reaction. Fritz

Jacobi, the first whom I allowed to look into this chaos, and whose nature was also stirred to its depths, received my confidences with warmth, responded to them, and endeavoured to lead me to his own opinions. He, too, felt an unutterable mental craving, he, too, did not wish to have it appeased by outward aid, but aimed at development and illumination from within. I could not understand all that he told me of the state of his mind, all the less, as I could form no clear conception of my own. Still, as he was far in advance of me in philosophical thought, and even in the study of Spinoza, he endeavoured to guide and enlighten my blind endeavours. Such a purely intellectual relationship was new to me, and excited a passionate longing for further intercourse. At night, after we had separated and withdrawn for the night, I sought him out again. With the moonlight quivering over the broad waters of the Rhine, we stood at the window, and revelled in that full interchange of ideas which is given in such rich measure to the happy springtide of life.

Yet no account of the unutterable joy of those moments is possible to me now. Much more distinct in my mind is the memory of an excursion to the hunting-seat of Bensberg, lying on the right bank of the Rhine, and commanding a most splendid prospect. What delighted me beyond measure was the decoration of the walls by Weenix. All the animals that the chase can furnish were skilfully arranged all round the room, as though decorating the plinths of the columns in a large open hall; and above these again the eye roamed over a wide landscape. The wonderful artist had expended his whole skill in giving life to these lifeless creatures. In the delineation of the varied nature of their coats, bristles, hair, feathers, antlers and claws, he had equalled nature, while, in the effect produced, he had excelled her. When we had sufficiently admired these works of art, as a whole, we were led to reflect on the devices which could produce such pictures, combining so much inventive and mechanical skill. We could not understand how they could be created by the hands of man, or by any of his instruments. The brush was surely insufficient; such variety could only be explained by presupposing the use of special appliances. Whether we looked at them

near, or at a distance, our astonishment was the same; the cause was as wonderful as the effect.

Our further journey down the Rhine was both happy and fortunate. The widening of the river invites the mind also to widen its bounds, and to look into the distance. We arrived at Düsseldorf, and came from thence to Pempelfort, a lovely and delightful resting-place, where a spacious mansion, opening upon extensive and well-kept gardens, had gathered a refined and cultured company within its walls. The family was numerous in itself, nor was there ever any lack of visitors, attracted by its generous hospitality and agreeable society.

In the Düsseldorf gallery my predilection for the Dutch school found abundant satisfaction. There were whole rooms filled with these vigorous, robust pictures, glowing with all the fulness of nature; and if my views were not widened, still my store of knowledge was enriched and my predilection confirmed.

The beautiful composure, content, and constancy, which formed the main characteristics of this family circle, were soon evident to the observant eye of their guest, who could not fail to perceive that a wide sphere of influences had here its centre and its source. The activity and opulence of the neighbouring cities and villages contributed not a little to enhance this feeling of inward satisfaction. We visited Elberfeld, and were delighted with the busy aspect of so many flourishing manufactories. Here we fell in again with our friend Jung, commonly known as Stilling, who had already been as far as Coblentz to meet us, and found in him still that faith in God and fidelity towards men, which were his most treasured lodestones. Here we saw him in his own circle, and delighted in the confidence reposed in him by his fellow citizens, who, though occupied with earthly gain, did not lose sight of heavenly treasures. The spectacle of this industrious region was a tranquillizing one, because its prosperity was the result of order and cleanliness, and we spent happy days in the study of its various aspects.

When I returned to my friend Jacobi, I experienced the rapturous delight which springs from an intimate union of souls. We were both inspired by the liveliest hope of finding

common scope for our activities, and I strongly urged him to give vigorous expression in some form to all that was stirring within him. This was the means by which I had escaped from many perplexities, and I hoped that it would relieve him also. He made no demur, but entered upon the task with zeal, and with what great, beneficent, and consolatory results! And so, at last, we parted with the happy feeling of an indissoluble bond between us, and wholly without a presentiment that our efforts would assume such distinctly opposite directions, as they did in our later life.

Any other events which happened to me on the return journey up the Rhine have altogether vanished from my memory, partly because the second impressions of natural objects are wont, in my mind, to be mingled with the first; and partly because, with my thoughts turned inward, I was endeavouring to arrange the varied experience I had gained, and to give form to the impressions I had received. It is here the place to speak of one important result, which impelled me to creative efforts, and so occupied me for some length of time.

With my disposition to free-thinking, and a life and activity as aimless and purposeless as mine, I could not long fail to observe that Lavater and Basedow employed intellectual and even spiritual means for earthly ends. It soon struck one who, like myself, wasted life and talents in the pursuit of no definite object, that these two men, while endeavouring to preach their doctrines, to teach and to convince, had each in his own way, certain aims in the background—in the advancement of which they were both keenly interested. Lavater went gently and prudently to work, Basedow vehemently, wantonly, and even clumsily; but both were so convinced of the excellence of their favourite schemes and undertakings, and of their mode of prosecuting them, that all were compelled to look upon them as sincere, and to love and honour them as such. In praise of Lavater especially, it could be said that he really had higher aims, and, if he acted according to the wisdom of this world, it was in the belief that the end would hallow the means. As I observed them both, and even frankly gave them my opinions and received theirs in return, the thought arose in me that every highly-gifted man

desires indeed to impart whatever there is of divine within him to those around. In attempting this, however, he comes in contact with the harsh world, and, in order to act upon it, he must put himself on the same level. In so doing, however, he is forced to yield many of his high advantages, and finally forfeit them altogether. The heavenly, the eternal is buried in the clay of earthly aims, and hurried with it to the transitory fate of mortal things. Considering the career of these two men from this point of view, they seemed to me to deserve both honour and compassion; for I thought I could foresee that each of them would be compelled to sacrifice the higher to the lower. As I pursued this train of thought to its farthest bounds, and looked beyond the limits of my narrow experience for similar cases in history, the plan occurred to me of taking the life of Mahomet, whom I had never been able to think an impostor, as a dramatic illustration of those courses I had so narrowly observed in actual life, which lead to ruin rather than to good. I had shortly before read the life of the Eastern Prophet, and studied it with great interest, so I was tolerably well equipped when the thought occurred to me. The plan as a whole approached more closely to the regular form to which I was again inclining, although I still used in moderation the liberty once gained for the stage, arranging time and place at pleasure. The piece opened with a hymn, sung by Mahomet alone under the open sky. He first adores the innumerable stars as so many divinities; but when the friendly star, Gad (our Jupiter), arises, he offers to him, as king of the stars, exclusive adoration. Not long after the moon rises above the horizon, and wins the eye and heart of the worshipper, who, presently refreshed and strengthened by the dawning sun, is stirred to the outpouring of new praise. But this changing attitude, however delightful, is still unsatisfactory, and the mind feels that it must rise still higher. It mounts, therefore, to God, the Only, Eternal, Infinite, to whom all these magnificent yet finite creatures owe their existence. The composition of this hymn gave me great delight; it is now lost, but might easily be restored for the purpose of a cantata, and would commend itself to the musical composer by the variety of its expression. It

would, however, be necessary to imagine it sung, according to the original plan, by the leader of a caravan with his family and the whole tribe; which would supply the necessary alternation of voices, and the strength of the choruses.

When Mahomet has thus wrought his own conversion, he imparts these feelings and sentiments to his friends. His wife and Ali become his disciples without reserve. In the second act, he attempts, supported by the still more zealous Ali, to propagate this faith in the tribe. Assent and opposition follow according to the various types of character. The contest begins, the strife waxes violent, and Mahomet is compelled to flee. In the third act, he defeats his enemies, and establishing his own as the public religion, purifies the Kaaba from idols; but, as all this cannot be done by force alone, he is obliged to resort to cunning. The earthly element in his character grows and spreads; the divine falls back and is obscured. In the fourth act, Mahomet pursues his conquests, his doctrine becomes a pretext rather than an end; all conceivable means are allowable, and barbarities become frequent. A woman, whose husband has been put to death by Mahomet's order, poisons him. In the fifth act, he becomes aware that he is poisoned. His great composure, the return to his true and higher self, make him worthy of admiration. He purifies his doctrine, establishes his rule, and dies.

Such was the sketch of a work which long occupied my mind, for as a rule I was obliged to think out some plan before beginning to write. I meant to represent the power which genius exercises over men through character and intellect, and what are its gains and losses in the process. Several of the songs, to be introduced in the drama, were composed beforehand; all that remains of them, however, is the one among my poems bearing the title "*Mahomets Gesang*," (Mahomet's Song). According to the plan, this was to be sung by Ali in honour of his master, at the highest point of his success, just before the changed aspect of affairs resulting from the poison. I can also remember the outlines of several scenes, but to give an exposition of them here would lead me too far.

FIFTEENTH BOOK

From these manifold dissipations, which, however, generally gave occasion for serious, and even religious reflections, I always returned to my high-souled friend, Fräulein von Klettenberg, whose presence calmed, at least for a moment, my stormy and wayward impulses and passions, and to whom, next to my sister, I liked best to confide my projects. I might, indeed, have perceived that her health was constantly failing, but I concealed it from myself, which was not difficult as her cheerfulness increased with her illness. She used to sit, in neat and spotless attire, in her chair at the window, and listened kindly to the narratives of my little expeditions as well as to what I read aloud to her. Often, too, I made sketches, to help out the description of the places I had seen. One evening, I had just been recalling various scenes; as she sat in the light of the setting sun she and her surroundings appeared transfigured before me, and I could not refrain from making a drawing of her and of the objects in the chamber, as well as my want of skill permitted. In the hands of a skilful artist like Kersting it would have made a charming picture. I sent it to a lady friend at a distance, and added a song as commentary and supplement:

"In this magic glass reflected
See a vision, mild and bless'd;
By the wing of God protected,
See our friend, while suffering, rest.

"Mark, how her endeavours bore her
Upwards from life's troubled sea;
See thine image stand before her,
And the God, who died for thee.

"Think what I, in the vibrations
Of this heavenly ether thought,
As with striving and impatience
I the drawing roughly wrought."

Though in these stanzas, as frequently happened, I expressed myself as an outsider and stranger, or even as a heathen, she did not take offence at it; on the contrary, she assured me that in so doing I pleased her much more than when I attempted to employ the Christian terminology, which somehow I could never apply correctly. Indeed, it had become a standing custom with me, whenever I read to her reports of mission work, which she was always fond of listening to, to take the part of the pagans against the missionaries, and to praise their former state as preferable to their new one. She always remained kind and gentle, and seemed not to have the least fear about me or my salvation.

My gradual alienation from her creed arose from the fact that I had tried to adopt it with too great zeal and with passionate love. Ever since I had become intimately acquainted with the Moravians, my attachment to this Society, which met under the banner of Christ, had constantly increased. All positive religions exercise their greatest fascination in the days of their early youth, and hence it is delightful to go back in mind to the time of the Apostles, where everything is seen in its first freshness and pure spirituality; and this explains the almost magical attraction of the Moravian community, which seemed to perpetuate for ever the conditions of those early times. It traced its descent in unbroken line from them; it had never ceased its activity, but had sent its tendrils unnoticed through the rough world; at last one little germ took root under the protection of a devout and eminent man, and so once more from an insignificant, apparently accidental, beginning it was to spread over the wide world. In this Society, the most important point was the inseparable combination of the religious and civil constitution, making the teacher at the same time the ruler, and the father the judge. What was still more distinctive of their fraternity was that the Divine Head, in whom implicit faith was placed in spiritual things, was also invoked to be their guide in temporal affairs, and His response, whether referring to the government of the whole body, or the destiny of individuals, when revealed by the casting of lots, was received in reverent obedience. Its peace and harmony to which at any rate outward

appearance bore witness, were most attractive, while, on the other hand, the missionary vocation seemed to call forth and to give employment to all man's active powers. The excellent persons whose acquaintance I made at the synod at Marienborn, which I attended in the company of Councillor Moritz, the agent of Count von Isenburg, had won my unqualified esteem, and it only rested with them to make me one of themselves. I studied their history, and the origin and growth of their tenets, and had an opportunity of explaining and talking about them with persons interested in them. Nevertheless, I observed that the brethren did not regard me as a Christian any more than did Fräulein von Klettenberg. From the first this disturbed me, and afterwards tended to cool my ardour. For a long time I failed to discover the precise ground of difference, although it was fairly obvious, until at last it was forced upon me more by accident than by reflection. What separated me from this brotherhood, as well as from other good Christian souls, was the very point on which the Church has more than once fallen into dissension. On the one hand, it was maintained that by the Fall human nature had been so corrupted to its innermost core, that not the least good could be found in it, and that therefore man must renounce all trust in his own powers, and look to grace and its operations for everything. The other party, while it admitted the hereditary imperfections of man, nevertheless ascribed to nature a certain germ of natural goodness, which, quickened by divine grace, was capable of growing into a gladsome tree of spiritual happiness. Without knowing it, I was thoroughly imbued with this latter conviction, in spite of having professed the contrary opinion with lips and pen; but I had groped my way in such blindness, that I had never once clearly stated the dilemma to myself. From this dream I was unexpectedly roused one day, when, in a religious conversation, I frankly advanced opinions, to my mind most innocent, and had in return to undergo a severe lecture. The ideas, it was maintained, were genuine Pelagianism, a pernicious doctrine again gaining ground, to the great injury of modern times. I was astonished and even terrified. I went back to Church history, studied the doctrine and fate of Pelagius more closely, and now saw clearly how these two irreconcilable opinions

had fluctuated through whole centuries, and one or the other had been accepted by different men, according as they were of a more active or of a more passive nature.

The course of recent years had constantly led me to ever greater exercise of my own powers. A restless activity was at work within me, combined with a great desire for moral development. The world without demanded that this activity should be regulated and employed for the good of others, and I felt called upon to work out an answer to this great demand. Everything pointed me to nature, and she had revealed herself to me in all her glory; I had made the acquaintance of many good and true men who were toiling to do their duty for its own sake; to renounce them, nay to renounce myself, seemed impossible. The gulf which separated me from the doctrine of man's total depravity now became plain to me. Nothing, therefore, remained to me but to part from this Society; and as my love of the Scriptures, as well as of the founder of Christianity and its early professors, could not be taken from me, I constructed a Christianity for my private use, and sought to verify and develop it by an attentive study of history and a careful observation of those who inclined to my opinion.

As every new mental acquisition, which had caused me satisfaction, immediately assumed a poetic form, I now conceived the strange idea of treating in epic form the history of the Wandering Jew, which chap-books had long since impressed upon my mind. My design was to bring out in the course of the narrative such prominent points of the history of religion and the Church as I should find convenient. I will now explain the way in which I treated this legend, and what meaning I gave to it.

In Jerusalem, there lived a shoemaker, whose name according to the legend was Ahasuerus. For this character my Dresden shoemaker had supplied the main features. I had furnished him with the spirit and humour of Hans Sachs, a fellow craftsman of his, and ennobled him by a love of Christ. Sitting in his open workshop, he liked to talk with the passers-by, would jest with them, and, in Socratic fashion, give each the spur he needed. Therefore the neighbours and others of the people took pleasure in lingering at his

booth; even Pharisees and Sadducees spoke to him, and the Saviour himself with his disciples would often stop at his door. The shoemaker, whose thoughts were directed solely towards the world, nevertheless conceived a special affection for our Lord, which evinced itself chiefly in a desire to convert this noble-minded man, whose thoughts he did not comprehend, to his own way of thinking and acting. Accordingly, he earnestly adjured Christ to abandon his contemplative life, and to leave off going about the country with such idlers, drawing the people away from their work into the wilderness. A multitude, he said, was always ready for excitement, and nothing good could come of it.

On the other hand, the Lord endeavoured, by parables, to instruct him in his higher views and aims, but these were all thrown away on his mere matter-of-fact intellect. Thus, when Christ became more and more important, and finally a public character, the friendly workman pronounced his opinions still more sharply and vehemently, maintaining that nothing but disorder and tumult could follow from such proceedings, and that Christ would at last be compelled to put himself at the head of a party, though that could not possibly be his design. Finally, when things had taken the course which history narrates, and Christ had been seized and condemned, Ahasuerus gives yet more bitter vent to his indignation; at this point Judas, who apparently had betrayed his Lord, in his despair enters the workshop, and with lamentations relates how his plans had miscarried. He had been, he said, as well as the shrewdest of the other disciples, firmly convinced that Christ would declare himself regent and head of the nation. His purpose was only forcibly to compel the Lord, whose hesitation had hitherto been invincible, to hasten the declaration, and he had accordingly incited the priesthood to an act of violence, which previously they had not the courage to commit. The disciples, on their side, were not without arms, and probably all would have turned out well, if the Lord had not given himself up, and left them in the most forlorn state. Ahasuerus, whom this narrative in no wise tends to pacify, only augments the agony of the poor ex-apostle, so that his only course is to hang himself with all speed.

As Jesus is led past the workshop of the shoemaker, on his way to execution, the well-known scene of the legend occurs. The sufferer faints under the burden of the cross, and Simon of Cyrene is compelled to carry it. Upon this, Ahasuerus comes forward, and plays the part of those severely common-sense people, who, when they see a man involved in misfortune through his own fault, instead of feeling pity, are urged by an untimely sense of justice to make the matter worse by their reproaches. As he comes out, he repeats all his former warnings, changing them into vehement accusations, which his attachment to the sufferer seems to justify. The Saviour does not answer, but at the same instant the loving Veronica covers his face with the napkin, on which, as she removes it and raises it aloft, Ahasuerus sees depicted the features of the Lord, not indeed as those of the sufferer of the moment, but as of one transfigured and radiant with celestial life. Dazzled by the sight, he turns away his eyes and hears the words: "Thou shalt wander upon the earth, till thou shalt once more see me in this form." Overwhelmed at the sentence, it is some time before the shoemaker recovers his self-possession; he then finds that every one has gone to the place of execution, and that the streets of Jerusalem are empty. Disquiet and longing drive him forth, and he begins his wandering.

Elsewhere, I may, perhaps, speak of these wanderings, and of the incident which closed but did not properly conclude the poem. The beginning, some detached passages, and the conclusion, were written. I lacked the concentration, I lacked time for the studies necessary to enable me to give it the significance that I wished. The few sheets which I did write were the more willingly laid aside, as a new epoch in my development had necessarily been begun when I wrote *Werther* and saw the effects of its publication.

The common fate of man, which all of us have to bear, must weigh most heavily on those whose intellectual powers expand early and rapidly. We may grow up under the protection of parents and relatives; we may lean for a while upon our brothers and sisters and friends, be supported by acquaintances, and made happy by those we love, but in the end a man is always driven back upon himself, and it seems

as if the Deity had assumed such an attitude towards men as not always to be able to respond to their reverence, trust, and love, at least not in the precise moment of need. Early enough, and by many a hard lesson, had I learned that at the most urgent crises the call to us is, "Physician, heal thyself;" and how often had I not been compelled to sigh in my pain, "I tread the wine-press alone!" So now, while I was looking about for the means of establishing my independence, I felt that the surest basis on which to build was my own creative talent. For many years I had never known it to fail me for a moment. What, waking, I had seen by day, often shaped itself into regular dreams at night, and when I opened my eyes there was present in my mind either a wonderful new conception or an old one partially worked out. Usually, my time for writing was early in the morning; but also in the evening, or far into the night, when wine and social intercourse had raised my spirits, I was ready for any topic that might be suggested; only let a subject at all characteristic be offered, and I was at once ready and prepared. While, then, I reflected upon this natural gift, and found that it belonged to me as my own, and could neither be fostered nor hindered by anything external, I liked in thought to base my whole existence upon it. This conception soon assumed a distinct form; the old mythological image of Prometheus occurred to me, who, apart from the gods, peopled a world from his own workshop. I felt clearly, that the necessary condition for the production of a work of importance is isolation. My productions which had met with so much applause were children of solitude, and since my relation to the world had become wider, I had lacked neither the power nor pleasure of inventing, but the execution halted, because neither in prose nor in verse had I, properly speaking, a style, and consequently, with every new work, I had to begin at the beginning over again and try experiments. As in so doing I had to decline and even to exclude the aid of men, so, after the fashion of Prometheus, I separated myself from the gods also, and this was the more inevitable as with my character and mode of thinking one phase of feeling always swallowed up and excluded all others.

The fable of Prometheus lived again in my mind. The

old Titan robe I adapted to my own measurements, and without further reflection began to write a piece representing the quarrel with Jupiter and the later gods, in which Prometheus involved himself by fashioning men with his own hand and giving them life by the aid of Minerva, and so founding a third dynasty. And, in fact, the reigning gods had good cause to feel aggrieved, since they might now be regarded in the light of wrongful intruders between the Titans and men. To this singular composition belongs a monologue which became famous in German literature for having induced Lessing to make a statement to Jacobi on certain weighty matters of thought and feeling. It thus served as the match to an explosion which revealed and brought into discussion the most secret sympathies of men of worth;—sympathies of which they perhaps were not themselves conscious, and which were still dormant in a society otherwise most enlightened. The schism was so violent, that owing to accidental circumstances it caused us the loss of one of our most valuable men, namely, Mendelssohn.

Although philosophical and even religious reflections may be, and before now have been suggested by this subject, it nevertheless belongs peculiarly to poetry. The Titans are the foil of polytheism, as the devil may be considered the foil of monotheism, though, like the one and only God to whom he stands in contrast, he is not a poetic figure. The Satan of Milton, though drawn skilfully enough, still appears in the disadvantageous light of an inferior creature attempting to destroy the splendid creation of a Higher Being; Prometheus, on the contrary, has the advantage of being able to create and fashion in defiance of superior beings. It is also a beautiful thought, and well suited to poetry, to represent men as created not by the Supreme Ruler of the world, but by an intermediate agent, who, however, as a descendant of the most ancient dynasty, possesses the dignity and importance requisite for such an office. Thus, and indeed under every aspect, the Grecian mythology is an inexhaustible mine of divine and human symbolism.

Nevertheless, it was not the Titanic, gigantic, heaven-storming aspect of Prometheus's character which afforded

material for my poetic art. It better suited me to represent that peaceful, plastic, long suffering opposition which recognizes the superior power, and still presumes to claim equality. And yet the bolder members of that race, Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus, were also my saints. Admitted to the society of the gods, they would not deport themselves submissively enough, but, by their haughty bearing as guests, provoked the anger of their host and patron, and drew down upon themselves a dreary exile. I pitied them; their condition had already been recognized by the ancients as truly tragic, and when I introduced them in the background of my *Iphigenie*, I was indebted to them for a part of the effect which that piece had the good fortune to produce.

At this period poetical composition and artistic designing went hand in hand. I drew the portraits of my friends in profile on grey paper, in white and black chalk. Whenever I dictated or listened to reading, I sketched the pose of the writer or reader, with the surrounding objects; the likeness was unmistakable, and the drawings were well received. Dilettanti always have an advantage, because they give their labour for nothing. But feeling the insufficiency of this copying, I betook myself once more to language and rhythm, which were much more at my command. How light-heartedly, how joyously and eagerly I went to work with them will appear from the many poems enthusiastically proclaiming the *nature* of art, and the *art* of nature, which at the moment of their production always infused new spirit into me as well as into my friends.

At this epoch, I was sitting one evening, engaged in this way, with a shaded light in my chamber, which at least gave it the air of an artist's studio, while the walls, with half-finished works pinned and hung on them, produced an impression of great industry, when there entered a slight, well-built man, whom, at first, in the twilight, I took for Fritz Jacobi, but soon, discovering my mistake, greeted as a stranger. In his free and well-bred carriage a certain military bearing was unmistakable. He announced himself by the name of von Knebel, and from a brief introduction I gathered that he was in the Prussian service, and that during a long residence in Berlin and Potsdam he had actively cultivated the acquaintance of the literary men at

those places, and of German literature in general. He had attached himself particularly to Ramler, and had adopted his mode of reciting poems. He was also familiar with all that Götz had written, who, at that time, had not yet made a name among the Germans. Through his exertions the *Mädcheninsel* (Isle of Maidens) of this poet had been printed at Potsdam, and had actually come into the hands of the King, who was said to have expressed a favourable opinion of it.

We had scarcely talked over these subjects of general interest in German literature, before I learned, to my great satisfaction, that at present he held an appointment in Weimar, his duty being to attend Prince Constantine. Of the state of things there I had already heard much that was favourable; for several strangers, who had come from Weimar, assured us that the Duchess Amalia had gathered round her the ablest men to assist in the education of the princes her sons; that the University of Jena, through its distinguished teachers, had also contributed to this excellent purpose; and that the arts were not only protected by this princess, but were practised by her with great diligence and zeal. We also heard that Wieland was in especial favour; also that the *Deutscher Merkur*, in which the works of so many scholars in other places appeared, contributed not a little to the fame of the city in which it was published. There also was one of the best theatres in Germany, made famous by its actors, as well as by the authors who wrote for it. These noble beginnings and possibilities seemed, however, to have received a sudden check, and to be threatened with a long interruption, in consequence of the terrible conflagration of the castle, which had taken place in the May of that year. But the confidence in the Hereditary Prince was so great that everyone was convinced that not only would the damage be repaired, but that, in spite of it, every other hope would be splendidly fulfilled. As I inquired after these persons and matters, as if I were an old acquaintance, and expressed a wish to become more intimately acquainted with the life at Weimar, my visitor replied, in the most friendly manner possible, that nothing was easier, since the Hereditary Prince, with his brother, the Prince Constantine, had just arrived

in Frankfort, and desired to see and know me. I at once expressed the greatest willingness to wait upon them, and my new friend told me that I must not delay, as their stay would not be long. In order to equip myself for the visit, I took von Knebel to my father and mother, who were greatly surprised at his arrival and the message he bore, and conversed with him with great satisfaction. I then proceeded with him to the young princes, who received me in a very easy and friendly manner; Count Görtz, also, the tutor of the Hereditary Prince, appeared pleased to see me. Though there was no lack of literary subjects for our conversation, accident furnished the best possible introduction to it, and rendered it at once important and profitable.

Möser's *Patriotische Fantasien* (Patriotic Fantasies), that is, the first part, was lying on the table, fresh from the binder, with the leaves uncut. As I was familiar with the work, while the others were barely acquainted with it, I had the advantage of being able to give a complete account of its contents, and found in it a most suitable subject of conversation with a young prince who was sincerely desirous, and also firmly determined, to make use of his station to do all the good in his power. Möser's book, both in its contents and its tone, could not but be highly interesting to every German. While by other writers division, anarchy, and impotence had been made a reproach to the German empire, according to Möser this very multitude of small states was highly desirable, as affording opportunity for the spread of culture in each, according to its needs, which must vary with the situation and peculiarities of such widely different provinces. Then I went on to show how Möser, making the city and bishopric of Osnabrück his starting-point, and passing thence to the province of Westphalia, set forth its relation to the whole empire, and in discussing its position connected the past with the present, deducing the latter from the former, and thus clearly showing what changes were desirable or not; in the same way every ruler need only pursue the same method in his own sphere to obtain a thorough knowledge of the constitution of the state he governs, its connection with its neighbours and with the whole empire, and so enable himself to judge both the present and the future.

In the course of our conversation, we discussed many points with regard to the difference between the States of Upper and Lower Saxony; not only their natural productions, it was observed, but also their manners, laws, and customs had differed from the earliest times, and, according to the form of religion and government, had been modified now in this way, now in that. We endeavoured to obtain a clearer view of the differences between the two regions, and in this attempt it soon appeared how useful it was to have a good model, which, if regard were not had to its individual peculiarities, but to the general method on which it was based, might be applied to the most widely differing cases, and thereby prove highly serviceable in helping us to form a correct judgment.

This conversation, which was continued at the dinner-table, created a better impression in my favour than I perhaps deserved. For instead of making such works as I might have produced myself the subjects of discussion; instead of demanding undivided attention for the drama or romance, I appeared, while discussing Möser's book, to prefer those writers whose talents proceeded from active life, and were directed to its immediate service, whereas works essentially poetical, which rose above moral and material interests, could only be of use indirectly and incidentally. These discussions went on like the stories of the Arabian Nights; one important topic was involved in or succeeded another; many themes were only touched upon without our being able to follow them up, and accordingly, as the stay of the young princes in Frankfort was necessarily short, they made me promise to follow them to Mainz and spend a few days with them there. I gave this promise gladly enough, and hastened home to impart the agreeable intelligence to my parents.

My father, however, could not by any means be brought to approve of it. In accordance with his sentiments as a citizen of the empire, he had always kept aloof from the great, and although constantly coming in contact with the *chargés d'affaires* of the neighbouring princes, he had nevertheless avoided all personal relations with them. In fact, courts were among the things about which he was accustomed to joke. He was indeed rather pleased if anyone

opposed his opinions on this head; only he was not satisfied unless his opponent maintained his side with wit and intelligence. If we allowed the truth of his "*Procul a Jove procul a fulmine*," but added, that with lightning the question was not so much whence it came as whither it went, he would quote the old proverb, "It is not good to eat cherries with great lords." When we replied that it was yet worse to eat with greedy people out of one basket, he would not deny the truth of this; only he was sure to have another proverb ready with which to put us to confusion. For since proverbs and rhyming saws originate with the people, who, because they are forced to obey, like at least to have their say, while their superiors, on the other hand, indemnify themselves by deeds; and since the poetry of the sixteenth century is almost wholly of a vigorous didactic character, there is in our language no lack of jests and serious adages, directed from below at those above. We young people, in our turn, now began to aim our missiles from above down on those below, as we fancied ourselves something great, and therefore took the side of the great. Of these sayings and rejoinders I will here insert a few.

A.

Long at court is long in hell,

B.

There many good folks warm them well.

A.

Such as I am, I'm still mine own,
To me shall favours ne'er be shown.

B.

Why blush a favour to receive?
For you must take, if you would give.

A.

This trouble at the court you catch,
That where you itch, you must not scratch.

B.

The sage, that would the people teach,
Must scratch a place that does not itch.

A.

Those who a slavish office choose,
One half of life are sure to lose,
And come what will they may be sure,
Old Nick the other will secure.

B.

Whoe'er with princes is at home,
Will some day find good fortune come;
Who courts the rabble,—to his cost
Will find that all his year is lost.

A.

Though wheat at court seems flourishing,
Doubt that great harvest it will bring,
When in your barn you deem it stored,
You find it but a scanty hoard.

B.

The wheat that blooms will ripen too,
For so of old it used to do;
And if a crop is spoil'd by hail,
The next year's harvest will not fail.

A.

He who would serve himself alone,
Should have a cottage of his own.
Dwell with his children and his wife,
Regale himself with light new wine,
And on the cheapest viands dine;
Then nothing can disturb his life.

B.

So, from a master you'd be free?—
Whither think you then to flee?
Dream not your freedom you will get,
You have a wife to rule you yet.
She by her stupid boy is ruled,
Thus in your home you still are schooled.

As I was lately looking up these rhymes in some old memorandum books, I fell in with many such *jeux d'esprit*, in which we had amplified pithy old German saws, and added other rhymed maxims which are equally verified by experience. A selection from them, as an epilogue to the *Puppenspiele* (puppet shows), may perhaps hereafter suggest some pleasant reflections.

But all these rejoinders could not move my father from his opinions. He was in the habit of reserving his strongest argument for the close of the discussion. This consisted of a minute description of Voltaire's adventure with Frederick the Second. He told us how the unbounded favour, familiarity and mutual obligations were suddenly cancelled and forgotten; how we had lived to see such a comedy as the arrest of that extraordinary poet and writer by the Frankfort civic guard, on the accusation of the Resident Freytag, and the warrant of the Burgomaster Fichard, and his confinement for some time in the tavern of the Rose, in the Zeil. To this we might have answered in many ways,—among others, that Voltaire himself was not free from blame,—but from filial respect we always yielded the point.

On the present occasion, when these things and others like them were alluded to, I hardly knew how to demean myself, for he warned me explicitly, maintaining that the invitation was given only to entice me into a trap, in order to take vengeance on me for my mischievous treatment of the favoured Wieland. Fully as I was convinced of the contrary, and though I saw but too plainly that a preconceived opinion, due to hypochondriac fancies, actuated my worthy father, yet I was unwilling to act in direct opposition to his convictions, and at the same time I could not find any excuse for failing to keep my promise, without appearing ungrateful and discourteous. Unfortunately our friend Fräulein von Klettenberg, to whose advice we usually resorted in such cases, was confined to her bed. In her and my mother I had two invaluable counsellors. I called them Word and Deed; for when the former turned her serene or rather blissful glance to earthly things, the perplexity which had troubled us children of earth, at once grew plain before her, and she could almost always point out the right way, because she looked upon the labyrinth from above, and was not herself entangled in it. When a decision was once made, the readiness and energy of my mother could be relied on. While the former had Sight for her aid, the latter had Faith, and as she maintained her serenity in all cases, she was never without the means of accomplishing what she purposed or desired. Accordingly

she was now despatched to our sick friend to obtain her opinion, and when this turned out in my favour, she was entreated to gain the consent of my father, who yielded unwillingly, and against his judgment.

It was in a very cold season of the year that I arrived at the appointed hour in Mainz. My reception by the young princes and by their attendants was no less friendly than the invitation. The discussions in Frankfort were recalled and resumed at the point where they had been broken off. When the conversation turned upon recent German literature and its audacious flights, it was perfectly natural that my famous piece, "*Götter, Helden, und Wieland*" (Gods, Heroes, and Wieland), should be referred to, and I noticed at once with satisfaction that they treated the matter lightly and good-humouredly. Being called on to give the real history of this *jeu d'esprit*, which had excited so great attention, I could not avoid confessing, first of all, that as true sons of the Upper Rhine, we knew no bounds either in our likes or dislikes. With us, reverence for Shakespeare was carried to adoration. But Wieland, with his characteristic propensity to destroy his own and his readers' interest, and damp their enthusiasm, had, in the notes to his translation, found frequent fault with the great author, and in such a way as to vex us exceedingly, and to diminish in our eyes the value of the work. We saw that Wieland, whom we had so highly revered as a poet, and who, as a translator, had rendered such great service, was, as a critic, capricious, one-sided, and unjust. Besides this, he had deliberately spoken against our idols, the Greeks, and this increased our hostility yet more. It is well known that the Greek gods and heroes are eminent not for their moral but for their glorious physical qualities, and for this reason they afford such splendid subjects for art. Now Wieland, in his *Alceste*, had presented heroes and demi-gods after the modern fashion. Against this we had nothing to say, as everyone is at liberty to mould poetic traditions to his own ends and way of thinking. But in the letters on this opera, which he inserted in the *Merkur*, he appeared to us to extol this mode of treating them in too partisan a spirit; and to commit an unpardonable sin against the noble ancients and their lofty style, by his absolute unwillingness

to recognize the strong, healthy nature which is the basis of their productions. We had just been discussing these grievances with considerable heat in our little society, when my customary mania for dramatizing everything seized me one Sunday afternoon, and so at one sitting, over a bottle of good Burgundy, I wrote off the whole piece, just as it stands. No sooner had it been read to those of my companions who were present, and received by them with exclamations of delight, than I sent the manuscript to Lenz at Strasburg, who also appeared enraptured with it, and insisted that it must be printed without delay. After some correspondence, I consented, and he sent it hastily to press at Strasburg. It was not till long afterwards that I learned that this was one of the first steps which Lenz took in his design to injure me, and to bring me into disgrace with the public; but at that time I neither knew nor surmised anything of the kind.

In this way I narrated to my new patrons, with perfect candour, the innocent origin of the piece, as well as I knew it myself, and to convince them that it contained no personalities, nor any ulterior motive, I also explained with what gaiety and recklessness we were accustomed to banter and ridicule each other among ourselves. With this explanation I saw that they were quite satisfied. They almost admired the great fear we had lest anyone of us should rest upon his laurels. They compared such a society to those Buccaneers who were afraid of becoming effeminate the first moment of repose, and whose leader, when there were no enemies to fight, and no plunder to seize, used to let off a pistol under the mess-table, so that even in peace they might be acquainted with wounds and suffering. After which discussion I was at last induced to write Wieland a friendly letter. I gladly availed myself of the opportunity, as, in the *Merkur*, he had referred in most generous terms to this piece of youthful folly, and, as was almost always his custom in literary feuds, had closed the affair in the most skilful manner.

The few days of my stay at Mainz passed very pleasantly; for when my new patrons were abroad paying visits and attending banquets, I remained with their suite, drew the portraits of several, or went skating, for which the frozen

moats of the fortification afforded excellent opportunity. I returned home full of the kindness I had met with, and, as I entered the house, was on the point of unburdening my heart by a minute account of it; but I saw only troubled faces, and soon learned that our friend Fräulein von Klettenberg was no more. At this I was greatly concerned, because, in my present circumstances, I needed her more than ever. They told me for my consolation, that a pious death had crowned her happy life, and that her cheerful faith had remained undisturbed to the end. But there was also another obstacle which prevented my talking freely about my visit. My father, instead of rejoicing at the fortunate issue of this little adventure, persisted in his opinion, and maintained that it was nothing but dissimulation on their side, and that perhaps they had something all the worse in store for me. I was thus driven to tell my younger friends my story, and to them I could not tell it circumstantially enough. But their attachment and good will led to a result, most unpleasant to me. For shortly afterwards, appeared a pamphlet, called "Prometheus and his Reviewers," also in dramatic form. In it the comical feature was introduced of putting engravings of little figures between the speeches, instead of proper names, and giving all sorts of satirical pictures of those critics who had published their opinions upon my works, or on works akin to them. In one place the Altona courier, without a head, was blowing his horn, in another a bear was growling, and in another a goose was cackling. The *Merkur*, too, was not forgotten, and many wild and tame animals were represented in the studio of the sculptor endeavouring to disturb him, while he, without taking particular notice of them, kept zealously at his work, and did not refrain from expressing his opinion about the methods he intended to adopt. The sudden appearance of this skit surprised me greatly; for its style and tone evidently showed that it was by a member of our band, and indeed I feared it might be attributed to me. But what was most annoying, was the fact that "Prometheus" made some allusions to my stay at Mainz and to what was said there, which nobody but myself ought to have known. To me this was a proof that the author was one of my most intimate circle of friends, who had heard me relate these

events in detail. Accordingly we all looked at each other, and each suspected the rest, but the unknown writer succeeded very well in keeping his secret. I reproached him vehemently, because it was exceedingly vexatious to me to see an occasion for fresh distrust and disagreement, after so gracious a reception and so important a conversation, and after the confiding letter I had written to Wieland. However my uncertainty on this point was not of long duration. As I walked up and down my room reading the book aloud, I could plainly hear the voice of Wagner in the sallies and the terms used—and he it was. When I rushed downstairs to impart my discovery to my mother, she confessed to me that she already knew it. Alarmed at the ill results of what had seemed to him a good and praiseworthy plan, the author had discovered himself to her, and besought her intercession with me not to fulfil my threat of holding no further intercourse with the writer who had so abused my confidence. The fact that I had found him out myself was very much in his favour, for the satisfaction always attending a discovery of one's own, inclined me to be merciful. The fault which had furnished such a proof of my discernment, was forgiven. Nevertheless, it was not easy to convince the public that Wagner was the author, and that I had had no hand in the matter. No one believed that he possessed such versatility, because they failed to consider that it was very easy for him to grasp, notice, and reproduce in a well-known style all that for some time past had been the subject of jest or discussion in an intellectual society, and that he did not therefore necessarily possess any remarkable talent. And thus on this occasion as well as subsequently, I had to suffer not only for my own follies but also for the indiscretion and precipitancy of my friends.

As the remembrance of them is suggested by various concurrent circumstances, I should like to mention some distinguished men who, at different times, passed through Frankfort, and either lodged at our house or partook of our friendly hospitality. Once more Klopstock stands justly at the head. I had already exchanged several letters with him, when he announced to me that he was invited to go to Carlsruhe to reside there; that he would be in Friedberg

by a specified day, and wished me to call for him there. I did not fail to be there at the appointed hour. He, however, had been accidentally detained upon the road; and after I had waited in vain for some days, I returned home. He did not arrive there till some time later, and then excused his delay, and greatly appreciated my readiness to come to meet him. His person was small but well-built; his manners without being stiff, were serious and precise; his conversation was decided and agreeable. On the whole there was something of the diplomatist in his bearing: that is a man who undertakes the difficult task of maintaining at the same time his own dignity and that of a superior to whom he is responsible; of advancing his own interests, together with the much more important interests of a prince, or even of a whole state; and, before all things, of making himself agreeable to other men while in this critical position. In this way Klopstock appeared to bear himself as a man of worth and as the representative of higher spheres—of religion, of morality and freedom. He had also acquired another peculiarity of men of the world—namely, an unwillingness to speak on subjects upon which he was particularly expected and desired to discourse. He was seldom heard to mention poetic and literary subjects. But as he found in me and my friends a set of passionate skaters, he discoursed to us at length on this noble art, on which he had thought much, and had considered carefully what ought to be aimed at, and what avoided. Still, before we could receive the instruction he proffered, we had to submit to be put right as to the word itself, about which we were in error.* We spoke in good Upper German of *Schlittschuhe*, which he would by no means admit; for the word, he said, does not come from *Schlitten* (sledge), as if you went on little runners, but from *Schreiten* (to stride), because, like the Homeric gods, the skater strides away on these winged shoes over the frozen surface of the sea. Next we came to the instrument itself. He would have nothing to do with the high, grooved skates, but recommended the low, broad, smooth-bottomed Frisian steels as the most serviceable for speed. He was no friend to the feats of skill which are

* There are two words used for "skate." One of them *Schlittschuh* (sledge-shoe) is really a corruption of the other *Schrittschuh* (stride-shoe). Goethe frequently uses the form *Schrittschuh*.

usually performed in this exercise. I procured, according to his instructions, a pair of flat skates, with long toes, and used them for several years, though with some discomfort. He understood, too, the science of horsemanship and even horse-breaking, and liked to talk about it. Thus, as if by design, he avoided all conversation upon his own profession, in order to speak with greater freedom about arts quite foreign to it, which he pursued only as a pastime. I might say much more of these and other peculiarities of this extraordinary man, if those who lived longer with him had not already informed us fully about them. One observation, however, I will not suppress, which is, that men endowed by nature with uncommon advantages, but placed in a narrow sphere, or at least in one disproportioned to their powers, generally fall into eccentricities; and as they have no opportunity of making direct use of their gifts, seek to employ them in an extraordinary or whimsical manner.

ZIMMERMANN was also for a time our guest. He was tall and powerfully built; by nature passionate and uncompromising, he yet had his outward bearing and manners perfectly under control, so that in society he appeared as a skilful physician and polished man of the world. It was only in his writings and among his most intimate friends, that he gave the reins to his untamed inner nature. His conversation was varied and highly instructive, and for one who could pardon his keen sensitiveness on the score of his own personal feelings and merits, no more desirable companion could be found. As what is called vanity never annoyed me, and I for my part often presumed to be vain also—that is, did not hesitate to display whatever pleased me in myself, I got on with him capitally. We mutually allowed one another to be and do what he liked; and, as he was thoroughly frank and communicative, I learned from him a great deal in a short time.

Were I to judge such a man gratefully, charitably, and profoundly, I could not even say that he was vain. We Germans misuse the word "vain" (*eitel*) but too often. Strictly speaking, it carries with it the idea of emptiness, and we properly designate by it only the man who cannot conceal his joy at his nothingness, his contentment with a hollow existence. With Zimmermann it was exactly the

reverse; he had great virtues, but no inward satisfaction. The man who cannot enjoy his own natural gifts in silence and find his reward in the exercise of them, but waits and hopes for the recognition and appreciation of his work by others, will generally find himself in a sorry case, because it is but too well known that men are very sparing of their applause; that they love to qualify their praise, and, where it is at all feasible, to turn it into blame. Whoever comes before the public without being prepared for this, will meet with nothing but vexation; since, even if he does not overestimate his own productions, he regards them as unconditionally valuable, while the reception they meet with in the world is always subject to reservation. Besides, a certain susceptibility is necessary for the enjoyment of praise and applause, as well as for every other pleasure. Let this be applied to Zimmermann, and it will be acknowledged in his case too, that no one can receive what he does not possess in himself.

If this apology cannot be allowed, still less shall we be able to justify another fault of this remarkable man, because it disturbed and even destroyed the happiness of others. I mean his conduct towards his children. A daughter, who travelled with him, stayed with us while he acquainted himself with the neighbourhood. She might be about sixteen years old, slender and well-formed, without affectation; her regular features would have been agreeable, if there had appeared a trace of interest in them, but she was always as quiet as a statue; she seldom spoke, and never in the presence of her father. But she had scarcely spent a few days alone with my mother, and felt the cheerful, loving influence of this sympathetic woman, than she threw herself at her feet with a bursting heart, and with a thousand tears begged to be allowed to remain with her. With the most passionate language she declared herself willing to remain in the house as a servant, as a slave all her life, rather than go back to her father, of whose severity and tyranny no one could form an idea. Her brother had gone mad under this treatment; she had hitherto borne it in misery, because she had believed that it was the same, or not much better, in every family; but now that she had experienced such loving, mild, and considerate treatment, her situation at home had become a perfect hell. My mother was greatly

moved as she related to me this passionate outburst, and, indeed, she went so far in her sympathy, as to give me pretty clearly to understand, that she would be content to keep the girl in the house, if I would make up my mind to marry her. If she were an orphan, I replied, I might think and talk it over, but God preserve me from a father-in-law who is such a father! My mother took great pains with the poor girl, but this made her only the more unhappy. At last the expedient was adopted of sending her to a boarding-school. Her life, however, was not a long one.

I should hardly mention this culpable peculiarity of a man of such great excellence, if it had not already become a matter of public talk, when after his death people spoke of the unhappy hypochondria with which he tortured himself and others in his last hours. For that severity towards his children was nothing less than hypochondria, a partial insanity, a continuous moral murder, which, after making his children its victims, was at last directed against himself. We must also remember that though apparently in such good health, he was a great sufferer even in his best years; that an incurable disease troubled the skilful physician who had relieved, and still gave ease to so many of the afflicted. Yes, this distinguished man, with all his outward reputation, fame, honour, rank, and wealth, led the saddest life, and whoever will take the pains to learn more about it from published sources, will not condemn but pity him.

If I am to give a more precise account of the influence exercised upon me by this distinguished man, I must once more recall the general features of that period. The epoch in which we were living might be called an epoch of great expectations, for everyone demanded of himself and of others what no mortal had hitherto accomplished. On chosen spirits who could think and feel, a light had dawned, enabling them to see that an immediate, original understanding of nature, and a course of action based upon it, was both the best thing a man could desire, and also not difficult to attain. Experience thus once more became the universal watchword, and everyone opened his eyes as wide as he could. Physicians, in particular, had the greatest reason to advocate this new method, and the best opportunity of putting it in practice. Upon them shone

a luminary out of the past, and appeared as a symbol of all they desired. The writings which had come down to us under the name of Hippocrates, furnished a model of the way in which a man should both observe the world and relate what he had seen, without subjective bias. But no one considered that we cannot see like the Greeks, and that we shall never become such poets, sculptors, and physicians as they were. Even granted that we could learn from them, still since their time an infinite amount of experience had been accumulated, not always free from bias, and too often brought into accord with preconceived opinions. And this too had to be known, discriminated, and sifted—again, a vast undertaking. Then, further, it was required that each observer, using his own eyes and acting on his own initiative, should acquaint himself with unspoiled nature, as if she were being observed and investigated for the first time, so that only what was genuine and real might be learned. But as learning has never existed without the accompaniment of a universal smattering and pedantry, and the practice of any profession rarely without empiricism and charlatanry, there ensued a violent conflict, the purpose of which was to distinguish use from abuse, and ensure the triumph of the grain over the chaff. In the execution of this design, it became evident that the shortest way to attain the end in view, was to call in the aid of genius, whose magic gifts would settle the strife, and accomplish what was required. Meanwhile, however, the intellect made its voice heard; everything, it alleged, must be reduced to clear notions, and exhibited in a logical form, so that every prejudice might be removed, and all superstition destroyed. And in view of the really incredible achievements of some extraordinary men, such as Boerhaave and Haller, people thought themselves justified in demanding even more from their pupils and successors. It was maintained that the path was opened, although in earthly things it is rarely possible to speak of a path; for, as the water dislodged by a ship, instantly flows in again behind it, so when great minds have dispelled error, and made room for themselves, it naturally closes in again behind them very speedily.

But the ardent Zimmermann refused once for all to

recognize these facts; he would not admit that the world is in fact full of absurdities. Impatient, even to madness, he fell upon everything that he saw or believed to be wrong. It was all the same to him whether he was fighting with a trained nurse or with Paracelsus, with a quack, or a chemist. His blows fell alike heavily in either case, and when he had made himself out of breath, he was greatly astonished to see the heads of this hydra, which he thought he had trodden under foot, springing up all fresh again, and showing their teeth from innumerable jaws.

Anyone who reads his writings, especially his valuable work "On Experience," will gain a clearer idea of the subjects discussed by this excellent man and myself. His influence over me was the more powerful, as he was twenty years my senior. Having a high reputation as a physician, he was chiefly employed among the upper classes, and the corruption of the times, caused by effeminacy and excess, was a constant theme of conversation with him. Thus his medical discourses, like those of the philosophers and my poetical friends, urged my return to nature. I could not entirely share his passion for reforming; on the contrary, after we separated, I soon reverted to my own proper calling, and endeavoured to employ the gifts nature had bestowed upon me, without undue exertion; and by good-natured opposition to what I disapproved to create a sphere for myself, in perfect indifference how far my activity might extend or whither it might lead me.

Von Salis, who was setting up the large boarding school at Marschlins, visited us also at that time. He was a grave, intelligent man, and must have silently passed many curious comments on the erratic life in our gifted little society. The same was probably the case with Sulzer, who came in contact with us on his journey to the south of France; at least a passage in his travels where he speaks of me, seems to favour this opinion.

These visits, which were as agreeable as they were profitable, were, however, diversified by others which we would rather have been spared. Needy and shameless adventurers appealed to my youthful credulity, supporting their urgent demands by real as well as fictitious relationships or misfortunes. They borrowed my money,

and made it necessary for me to borrow in turn, and thus involved me in most unpleasant relations with opulent and kind-hearted friends. If I wished that all these tiresome folks were food for the crows, my father found himself in the situation of the Magician's Apprentice,* who was willing enough to see his house washed clean, but is terrified when a deluge of water floods threshold and stairs. By an excess of kindness, the reasonable plan of life which my father had designed for me was step by step disturbed and deranged, and changed from day to day contrary to all expectation. All idea of a long visit to Ratisbon and Vienna was as good as given up; but still I was to pass through those cities on my way to Italy, so as to gain at least a general view of them. On the other hand, some of my friends, who did not approve of my making so great a detour on my way to active life, recommended that I should take advantage of favourable prospects which the moment presented and think of a permanent settlement in my native city. Although I was debarred from the Council, first by my grandfather and then by my uncle, there were yet many civil offices to which I could lay claim, and could hold for a time while awaiting the future. There were agencies of several kinds which offered employment enough, and the place of a *chargé d'affaires* was honourable. I listened to these arguments, and believed also that I was fitted for such a career, without considering whether a profession which demands a liking for useful activity in the midst of dissipation was one likely to suit my character. To these plans and designs there was now added a tender sentiment which seemed to draw me towards a domestic life and to accelerate my determination.

The society of young men and women already mentioned, which was kept together by my sister, even if it did not owe its origin to her, had continued after her marriage and departure, because the members had grown accustomed to each other, and knew no better way of spending one evening in the week than in this friendly circle. The eccentric orator also, whose acquaintance we made in the sixth book, had, after many adventures, returned to us, more clever and more preposterous than ever, and once

* The allusion is to Goethe's own poem "Der Zauberlehrling."

again played the part of legislator to the little state. As a sequel to our former diversions he had devised something of the same kind; he enacted that every week lots should be drawn, not as before to decide what pairs should be lovers, but real married couples. How lovers should conduct themselves towards each other, he said, we knew well enough; but of the proper deportment of husbands and wives in society we were totally ignorant, and this, with our increasing years, it was most essential to learn. He laid down general rules, which, of course, set forth that we must act as if we did not belong to each other; that we must not sit side by side or often speak to one another, much less indulge in anything like caresses. And at the same time we were not only to avoid everything which might occasion mutual suspicion and discord, but, on the contrary, he was to win the greatest praise, who with easy and natural manners should most endear himself to his wife.

The lots were at once drawn; some odd matches that resulted were laughed at and joked about, and the general marriage-comedy was entered into with good-humour, and renewed every week.

Now, strangely enough, at the very beginning the same lady fell to me twice. She was a very nice girl, just such a one as one would like to think of as a wife. Her figure was beautiful and well-proportioned, her face pleasing, while her manners were marked by a repose which testified to the health of her mind and body. Every day and hour she was exactly the same. Her domestic industry was in high repute. Though she was not talkative, good sense and natural refinement were recognizable in her language. To show friendliness and esteem to such a person was natural; I was already accustomed to do so, from general good-feeling; and now a customary kindness had become a social duty. But when the lot brought us together for the third time, our jocose lawgiver declared in the most solemn manner that Heaven had spoken, and we could not again be separated. We submitted to his sentence, and both of us adapted ourselves so well to our public conjugal duties, that we might really have served as a model. Since all the pairs who were severally united for the evening,

were obliged by the general rules to address each other during the few hours with *Du* (thou), we had, after a series of weeks, grown so accustomed to this familiar mode of address, that even in the intervals, whenever we chanced to meet, the *Du* would slip out without our feeling embarrassment. Habit is a strange thing; by degrees both of us felt that nothing was more natural than this relation. I liked her more and more, while her manner towards me gave evidence of a beautiful calm confidence, so that if a priest had been present, we might possibly have asked him to unite us on the spot without much hesitation.

As something new had to be read aloud at each of our social gatherings, I brought with me one evening, the *Mémoire* of Beaumarchais accusing Clavigo, in the original, which was absolutely new at the time. It met with great applause. The thoughts suggested by it were freely expressed, and after much discussion, my partner said: "If I were your liege lady and not your wife, I would entreat you to turn this memoir into a play: it seems to me perfectly suited for it." "That you may see, my love," I replied, "that liege lady and wife can be united in one person, I promise that, at the end of a week, the subject-matter of this work, in the form of a piece for the stage, shall be read aloud, as these pages have just been." They wondered at so bold a promise, and I did not delay to set about fulfilling it. What, in such cases, is called invention, was with me instantaneous. As I was escorting home my titulary wife I was silent. She asked me what was the matter? "I am thinking out the play," I answered, "and am already in the middle of it. I wished to show you that I would gladly do anything to please you." She pressed my hand, and as I kissed her warmly in return, she said: "You must not forget your part! To be loving, people think, is not proper for married folk." "Let them think," I rejoined, "we will have it our own way."

Before I got home,—it is true I took a very circuitous route,—the piece was pretty far advanced. Lest this should seem boastful, I will confess that previously, on the first and second reading, the subject had appeared to me dramatic and even theatrical, but, without an added stimulus, this piece, like so many others, would have remained among

the number of merely possible creations. My mode of treating it is well enough known. Weary of villains, who, from revenge, hatred or petty motives, attack a noble nature and ruin it, I wished, in Carlos, to show practical good sense, combined with true friendship, in conflict with passion, inclination and outward compulsion; and for once to compose a tragedy on these lines. Availing myself of the example of our dramatic patriarch Shakespeare, I did not hesitate for a moment to translate, word for word, the chief scene, and the dramatic setting of the original. Finally, for the conclusion, I borrowed the end of an English ballad, and so I was ready before the Friday came. The good impression I produced by reading it will easily be believed. My liege spouse took not a little pleasure in it, and it seemed as if our union was made closer and firmer by the production of this intellectual offspring.

Mephistopheles Merck here did me, for the first time, a great injury. When I showed the piece to him he answered: "You must not write such trash in future; others can do that." But in this he was wrong. We should not always transcend the notions which have become common property; it is good that much should accord with the common way of thinking. Had I at that time written a dozen such pieces, which with a little encouragement would have been easy enough, three or four would perhaps have retained a place on the stage. Every manager who knows the value of his *répertoire*, can say what an advantage that would have been.

By these, and other intellectual diversions, our strange marriage-game became, if not the talk of the town, a family story, which sounded pleasantly in the ears of the mothers of our fair ones. Nor did my mother object to my share in the game; she had previously looked favourably upon the lady with whom I had entered into so strange a relation, and did not doubt that she would make as good a daughter-in-law as a wife. The aimless bustle in which I had for some time lived was not to her mind, and, in fact, she suffered most from it. It was she who had to provide abundant entertainment for the stream of guests, without receiving any compensation for furnishing quarters for this literary army, beyond the honour they did her son by feasting

at his expense. Besides, she foresaw that so many young persons—all without means—met together not only for science and poetry but also for enjoyment—would soon become burdensome and harmful to themselves, and most certainly to me, whose thoughtless generosity and pleasure in being security for others she too well knew.

Accordingly, she looked on the long-planned Italian journey, which my father once more urged upon me, as the best means of finally severing all these connections. But, that no new danger might assail me in the wide world, she intended first to make my incipient engagement sure, so as to make me more anxious to return to my native country, and bring me to a final decision. Whether I only attribute this scheme to her, or whether she had actually formed it, perhaps, with her departed friend, I am not sure; enough, that her actions seemed to be based on a definite plan. I had often to listen to her regrets that since Cornelia's marriage our family circle was altogether too small; that I had lost a sister, my mother an assistant, and my father a pupil. Nor was this all. It happened, as if by accident, that my parents met the lady out walking, invited her into the garden, and conversed with her for a long time. There was some pleasantry about it at the supper-table, and it was remarked with satisfaction that she had pleased my father, as she possessed all the chief qualities which he, with his knowledge of women, deemed essential.

Various arrangements were now made in the first floor, as if guests were expected; the linen was examined, and some neglected furniture was remembered. One day I surprised my mother in a garret examining the old cradles, in particular an immense one of walnut, inlaid with ivory and ebony, in which I had formerly been rocked. She did not seem pleased when I said that such rocking-boxes were quite out of fashion, and that now people put babies, with their limbs free, into neat little baskets, and carried them about for show, by a strap over the shoulder, like other small ware.

In short;—such prognostics of a renewal of domestic activity became frequent, and, as I remained passive, the thought of a state which would last through life spread a peace over our house and its inmates such as had been long unknown.

PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH PART

In treating the story of a life of varied development, like the one we have ventured to undertake, it is necessary, in order to be intelligible and readable, that some parts of it, connected in time should be separated, whilst others which can only be understood by a connected treatment should be brought together : and the whole be so arranged in sections that the reader inspecting it intelligently may form an opinion on it, and turn it to his own use.

We open the present volume with this reflection, in justification of our mode of proceeding : and we add the request that our readers will note that the narrative is not resumed exactly where the preceding book left off, though the intention is to gather up the main threads one by one, and to introduce personages as well as thoughts and actions in as logical a sequence as may be.

PART THE FOURTH

NEMO CONTRA DEUM NISI DEUS IPSE

SIXTEENTH BOOK

WHAT people commonly say of misfortunes, that they never come singly, may be said with almost as much truth of good fortune too, and, indeed, of other circumstances which often gather round us with one accord; whether it be by a kind of fatality, or whether it be that man has the power of attracting to himself a series of related things.

At any rate, my present experience showed me everything conspiring together to produce an outward and an inward peace. The former came to me as I patiently awaited the result of what others were meditating and designing for me; the latter, however, I had to attain for myself by renewing my studies.

It was long since I had thought of Spinoza, and now I was driven to him by an attack made upon him. In our library I came across a little volume whose author railed violently against this original thinker; and to produce a more certain effect, had inserted as frontispiece a portrait of Spinoza himself, with the inscription: *Signum reprobationis in vultu gerens*, "bearing on his face the stamp of reprobation." There was no gainsaying this, indeed, so long as one looked at the portrait; for the engraving was wretchedly bad, and a perfect caricature: so that I could not help thinking of those adversaries who first of all misrepresent the object of their spite, and then assail this monster of their own creation.

This little book, however, made no impression upon me, since I never cared for controversial works, but always

preferred to learn from the author himself what his thoughts were, rather than to hear from another how he ought to have thought. Still, curiosity led me to the article "Spinoza," in Bayle's Dictionary, a work as valuable for its learning and acumen as it is ridiculous and pernicious in virtue of its gossip and scandal.

The article on Spinoza excited in me displeasure and distrust. To begin with, the philosopher is represented as an atheist, and his opinions as highly reprehensible; but immediately afterwards it is admitted that he was a calm thinker, devoted to his studies, a good citizen, a sympathizing neighbour, and a peaceable individual. The writer seemed to me to have quite forgotten the words of the gospel: *By their fruits ye shall know them*, for how could a life pleasing in the sight of God and man spring from corrupt principles?

I well remembered what peace of mind and clearness of vision came over me when I first glanced through the posthumous works of that remarkable man. The effect itself was still quite distinct in my mind, though I could not recall any particulars; so I hastily turned once more to the works to which I had owed so much, and breathed again the same calm air. I gave myself up to this reading, and thought, as I looked into myself, that I had never before seen the world so clearly.

As there always has been, and still is, even in these later times, so much controversy on this subject, I would not wish to be misunderstood, and therefore will here make a few remarks upon these doctrines, the object of so much fear and detestation.

Our physical as well as our social life, manners, customs, worldly wisdom, philosophy, religion, and many accidental happenings, all call upon us to deny ourselves. Much within us that is peculiarly our own, we are not allowed to develop in outward acts; much that we need from without for the perfecting of our character is withheld; while, on the other hand, much is forced upon us which is as alien to us as it is burdensome. We are robbed of all that we have laboriously acquired for ourselves, or friendly circumstances have bestowed upon us; and before we can see clearly what this means, we find ourselves compelled to part with our

personality, piece by piece, till at last it is gone altogether. But at the same time it seems a law of society to despise a man who shows he resents the process. On the contrary, the bitterer the cup we have to drink, the pleasanter our face should be, in order that the indifferent onlooker may not be offended by the least grimace.

To solve this painful problem, however, nature has endowed man with ample power, activity and endurance. But what is of the greatest aid to him is his volatile temperament, a boon to man, which nothing can take from him. By its means he is able to renounce the cherished object of the moment, provided that the next presents him with something new to reach after; and thus he goes on unconsciously remodelling his whole life. We are continually putting one passion in the place of another; pursuits inclinations, tastes, hobbies—we try them all, only to exclaim at last, *All is vanity*. No one is shocked at this false and blasphemous speech; nay, everyone thinks, as he says it, that he is uttering a wise and indisputable maxim. A few men there are, and only a few, who anticipate such an unbearable experience, and avoid all calls to such partial resignation by one grand act of total self-renunciation.

Such men are convinced of the existence of the Eternal, of the Inevitable, and of Immutable Law, and seek to form for themselves ideas which are imperishable, and which contemplation of the changing world cannot shake, but rather confirms. But since in this there is something superhuman, such persons are commonly esteemed *in*-human, deniers of God and of the World. Imagination can hardly give them enough horns and claws.

My confidence in Spinoza rested on the sense of serenity he wrought in me, and it only increased, when I found my worthy friends, the mystics, were accused of Spinozism, and learned that even Leibnitz himself could not escape the charge; and that Boerhaave, suspected of similar sentiments, had to abandon theology for medicine.

But let no one think that I would have subscribed to his writings, and assented to them *verbatim et literatim*. For I had long seen but too plainly that no man really understands another; that no one attaches the same idea to the same word that another does; that a conversation, a book, excites

in different persons different trains of thought:—and the reader will trust the assertion of the author of *Faust* and *Werther*, that deeply versed as he was in such misunderstandings, he was never so presumptuous as to think that he could perfectly understand a man, who, as a disciple of Descartes, had risen, through mathematical and rabbinical studies, to the loftiest heights of thought; and whose name even to this day seems to mark the limit of all speculative efforts.

How much I imbibed from Spinoza, would be shown distinctly enough, if I had ever carried out my plan of inserting a visit paid to Spinoza by the Wandering Jew, as an important incident in my poem. But this conception pleased me so much, and I took such delight in meditating on it in secret, that I never could bring myself to the point of setting it down in writing: till finally the idea which would have been well enough as a passing whim, expanded to such an extent that it lost its charm, and I banished the troublesome notion altogether from my mind. But I will now dwell as briefly and succinctly as possible on the main conceptions which I owed to my study of Spinoza, in so far as they have remained indelibly impressed on my mind, having exercised a great influence on the subsequent course of my life.

Nature works after such eternal, necessary, divine laws, that the Deity Himself could alter nothing in them. In this belief, all men are unconsciously agreed. It is enough to think how astonished and terrified we are at any natural phenomenon, which seems to imply any degree of understanding, reason, or even of caprice.

If anything like reason shows itself in the brute creation, it is long before we can recover from our amazement; for, although the animals stand so near to us, they yet seem to be divided from us by an infinite gulf, and to be entirely subject to the rule of necessity. It is therefore hardly reasonable to blame those thinkers who have pronounced the infinitely ingenious, but strictly limited, organization of those creatures, to be entirely mechanical.

If we turn to plants, our contention is still more strikingly confirmed. How unaccountable is the feeling which seizes us when we watch the mimosa, as soon as it is touched,

fold up its pinnate leaves in pairs, and finally bend down its little stalk as if upon a hinge. And this feeling, to which I will give no name, increases in intensity at the sight of the *Hedysarum Gyrans*, which without any apparent outward cause moves its little leaves up and down, and seems to play with itself as well as with our thoughts of it. Let us imagine a plantain tree suddenly endowed with similar capacity, so that it could of itself alternately let down and raise its huge leafy canopy: who would not start back in terror at the first sight of it? So rooted within us is the idea of our own superiority, that we absolutely refuse to concede to the outward world any participation in it; nay, if we could, we would too often deny such advantages to our fellow beings.

On the other hand, a similar horror seizes upon us, when we see a man unreasonably opposing universally recognized moral laws, or acting unwisely to his own detriment and that of others. To rid ourselves of the repugnance which we feel at such times, we convert it at once into censure or detestation, and we seek either in reality or in thought to free ourselves from such a man.

This distinction which Spinoza draws and throws into such strong relief, I, strangely enough, applied to my own being; and what has been said so far is, properly speaking, only for the purpose of rendering intelligible what is to follow.

I had come to look upon my indwelling poetic talent altogether as a force of Nature; the more so, as I had always been impelled to regard outward nature as its proper object. The exercise of this poetic faculty might indeed be excited and determined by circumstances; but its most joyful and richest action was spontaneous—even involuntary.

> "Through field and forest roaming,
> My little song still humming,
> Thus went the live-long day."

In my nightly vigils the same thing happened; so that I often wished, like one of my predecessors, to have a leathern jerkin made, and to get accustomed to writing in the dark, so as to be able at once to fix on paper all

such unpremeditated effusions. It had so often happened to me that after composing some snatch of poetry in my head I could not recall it, that I would now hurry to my desk and, without once breaking off, write off the poem from beginning to end, not even taking the time to straighten the paper, if it lay cross-wise, so that the verses often slanted across the page. In such a mood I preferred to get hold of a lead pencil, because I could write most readily with it; whereas the scratching and spluttering of a pen would sometimes wake me from my poetic dream, confuse me, and so stifle some trifling production in its birth. For poems thus created I had a particular reverence; for I felt towards them much as the hen does towards the chickens she has hatched when she sees them chirping about her. My old whim of making these poems known only by private readings, now returned to me: to barter them for money was abhorrent to me.

And this suggests to me a little incident, which, however, did not take place till some time after. When the demand for my works had increased and a collected edition of them was much desired, these feelings held me back from preparing it myself; Himburg, however, took advantage of my hesitation, and I unexpectedly received one day several copies of my collected works in print. With cool audacity this unauthorized publisher even boasted of having done me a public service, and offered to send me, if I wished, some Berlin porcelain by way of compensation. His offer served to remind me of the law which compelled the Jews of Berlin, when they married, to purchase a certain quantity of porcelain, in order to keep up the sale of the Royal manufacture. The general contempt which was shown for this shameless piracy led me to suppress my natural indignation at such a robbery. I gave him no reply; and while he was making good profit from the use of my property, I avenged myself in secret by the following verses:—

"Records of the years once dream'd away,
Long fallen hairs, and flow'rs that show decay,
Time faded ribbons, veils so lightly wove,
The mournful pledges of a vanished love;
Things that to the flames should long have gone,
—Irrev'rent Sosius snatches every one.

As if he were the lawful heir to claim
The heritage of poets' works and fame.
To me still living will it make amends
To have the tea and coffee-cups he sends!
Take back your china ware, your gingerbread!
For all the Himburgs living I am dead."

This same impulse of Nature, however, which caused me spontaneously to produce so many works, both great and small, was subject to long pauses, and for considerable periods I was unable, even when I most wished it, to originate anything, and consequently often suffered from ennui. The perception of such contrasts within me gave rise to the doubt whether, on the other hand, it would not be my wisest course to employ, for my own and others' profit and advantage, the human, rational, and intellectual part of my being, and to devote, as I already had done, and as I now felt myself more and more impelled to do, those intervals when Nature ceased to influence me, to worldly occupations, and thus leave none of my faculties unused. This course, which seemed to be dictated by those general theories already touched upon, was so much in harmony with my character and my position in life, that I resolved to adopt it and by this means to check the wavering and hesitation to which I had hitherto been subject. Very pleasant was it to me to reflect, that I might in this way claim a material return for actual services rendered to my fellow men, and at the same time continue disinterestedly to dispense that lovely gift of nature as a sacred trust. By such thoughts as these I was saved from the bitterness of feeling which might have arisen when circumstances forced upon me the observation that this very talent, so courted and admired in Germany, was treated as standing altogether beyond the pale of law and justice. For in Berlin not only were piracies considered perfectly allowable, and even laughable, but the estimable Margrave of Baden, so praised for his administrative virtues, and the Emperor Joseph who had justified so many hopes, lent their sanction, one to his Macklot, and the other to von Trattner, whom he had ennobled; and it was declared, that both the rights and the property of genius should be left at the absolute mercy of the artisan and trader.

One day, when we were complaining of this injustice to a visitor from Baden, he told us the following story: Her ladyship the Margravine, being a very active lady, had established a paper-manufactory; but the paper was so bad, that it was impossible to dispose of it. Thereupon the bookseller, Macklot, proposed to use this paper in publishing the works of German poets and prose writers, so as thereby to enhance its value. The suggestion was adopted with avidity.

Of course, we pronounced this malicious piece of scandal to be a mere fabrication; but it delighted us notwithstanding. The name of Macklot became a by-word among us, which we applied to designate any mean transaction. Thus, a light-hearted youth, often reduced to borrowing himself, while others were basely battening upon his talents, felt richly compensated for such usage by a few good jokes.

Happy children and youths wander on in a sort of intoxication, which betrays itself especially in the fact, that in their unworldly innocence, they are scarcely able to notice, and still less to appreciate, the influence exercised by their environment. They regard the world as raw material which they must shape, as a treasure-hoard of which they must take possession. Everything, they seem to think, belongs to them, everything must be subservient to their will; and this is often the reason why they lose themselves in a wild and reckless life. With the better part, however, this tendency expands into moral enthusiasm, turning spontaneously towards some actual or apparent good, but still oftener suffering itself to be prompted, guided, and even led astray.

Such was the case with the youth of whom we are at present speaking, and if his conduct appeared strange, still he was liked by many, who found in him from the first a complete open-mindedness, a cheerful frankness in conversation, and in action a tendency to follow the suggestions of the moment without consideration. Here follow one or two instances of this last-mentioned characteristic.

A fierce fire had broken out in the densely built *Judengasse*,

My desire to be of service, which prompted me to lend my active aid to all in need, led me to the spot, in full dress as I was. A passage had been broken through from All Saints' Lane (*Allerheiligengasse*), and thither I repaired. I found a great number of men busied with carrying water, rushing to the fire with full buckets, and back again with empty ones. I soon saw that, by forming a lane for passing the buckets up and down, the help we rendered might be made twice as effective. I seized two full buckets, stood still and called others to me; those coming on were relieved of their load as they approached, while those returning arranged themselves in a row on the other side. The suggestion was approved, my persuasion and personal efforts found favour, and the lane, unbroken from start to burning goal, was soon complete. Scarcely, however, had the hopefulness which this plan inspired called forth a happy, I might even say a merry humour in this well-regulated living machine, when a spirit of mischief showed itself, and was soon succeeded by malicious delight. The wretched fugitives, carrying away their miserable possessions upon their backs, if they once got within the lane, found themselves obliged to go the whole length of it, and were not allowed to pass unmolested. Mischievous boys spurted them with water, and added insult to injury. Very soon, however, by means of gentle persuasion and eloquent reproof, enforced perhaps by consideration for my good clothes, which I had forgotten, I managed to put a stop to their rudeness.

Some friends of mine had come up from curiosity, to watch the disaster, and seemed astonished to see their companion, in thin shoes and silk stockings—for that was then the fashion—engaged in this damp occupation. I only succeeded in persuading a very few to join us; the others laughed and shook their heads. We stood our ground, however, a long while, for, if any were tired and went away, there were plenty ready to fill their places. Many idle spectators, too, had come upon the scene, so that my innocent escapade became widely known, and my strange behaviour was for the time being the talk of the town.

Nor was this the only occasion on which I attracted general remark through this readiness to follow the

promptings of any good-natured, light-hearted impulse proceeding from a happy self-confidence which men are only too apt to blame as vanity.

A very inclement winter had frozen over the Main completely, and converted it into a solid surface. The ice became the animated scene of all kinds of business and pleasurable amusements. Endless skating-paths, and wide, smooth frozen plains swarmed with a moving multitude. I was always there from early morning, and, being lightly clad, was really chilled to the bone by the time my mother arrived in her carriage to visit the scene. She sat in the carriage, in her handsome purple velvet fur-trimmed cloak, fastened across the chest by a strong golden cord and tassel. "Give me your furs, dear mother!" I cried out instantly, without a moment's thought, "I am fearfully cold." She complied without hesitation, and a moment after I was wrapped in her cloak. Reaching half-way below my knees, with its purple-colour, sable-border, and gold trimmings, it contrasted not unpleasantly with the brown fur cap I wore. Thus attired, I unconcernedly went on skating up and down; the crowd was so great that no especial notice was taken of my strange appearance; still it did not escape notice altogether, for often afterwards it was brought up against me, in jest or earnest, as an example of my eccentricities.

We will now leave these recollections of happy, unpremeditated action, and resume the main thread of our narrative.

A witty Frenchman has said: "If a clever man has once attracted the attention of the public by any work of merit, everyone does his best to prevent his ever doing the like again."

Nothing could be truer: let us suppose some work of worth and talent produced in the quiet seclusion of youth; applause is won, but independence is lost; the talents which had been concentrated on his work are distracted by the demands of those who think they can appropriate some fragment of his personality.

It was in this way that I received a great many invitations, or, rather, not exactly invitations: a friend, an

acquaintance would propose, and often more than propose, to introduce me now here, now there.

The *quasi* stranger, now described as a bear on account of his frequent surly refusals, and then again, like Voltaire's Huron or Cumberland's West Indian, as a child of nature in spite of many talents, excited much curiosity, and in many families negotiations were set on foot to secure acquaintance with him.

Among others, a friend one evening entreated me to go with him to a little concert to be given in the house of an eminent merchant of the reformed persuasion. It was already late; but yielding to my love of acting on the spur of the moment, I went with him, respectably dressed, as usual. We were shown into a room on the ground floor,—their spacious ordinary family sitting-room. There was a large company assembled, a piano stood in the middle of the room at which the only daughter of the house sat down immediately, and played with considerable facility and grace. I stood at the far end of the piano, that I might be near enough to watch her bearing and appearance; there was something childlike in her manner, and the movements she made in playing were unconstrained and easy.

When she had finished her sonata, she stepped towards my end of the piano; we merely bowed without entering into conversation, for a quartet had already been started. At the close of it, I drew somewhat nearer and made some polite compliment; telling her what pleasure it gave me that my first acquaintance with her should at the same time make me acquainted with her talent. She made some graceful reply and we both kept our places. I saw that she observed me closely, and that I was really standing for inspection; but I took it all in good part, since I had something charming to look at in my turn. Meanwhile, we were observing each other, and I will not deny that I was sensible of a sweet and gentle attraction. Social demands and the varied entertainment prevented any further approach that evening. But I must confess that I was anything but displeased, when, on taking leave, the mother gave me to understand that they hoped soon to see me again, while the daughter seemed not indisposed to join in

the request. I did not fail to repeat my visits at suitable intervals, since I was sure of finding cheerful and intellectual conversation, which seemed free from all tendency to more passionate feelings.

In the meantime, having once thrown our house open to hospitality, its claims caused no small inconvenience both to my good parents and to myself. At any rate in my case it in no wise aided my steadfast desire to catch sight of the ideal, to learn to know it, to advance it, and if possible, to create after its likeness. Men, I saw, in so far as they were good, were pious-minded, and in so far as they were practical, were unwise and often blundered. Their piety could not help me, and their mistakes only confused me. One remarkable case I have carefully made note of.

In the beginning of the year 1775, JUNG, afterwards called Stilling, announced that he was coming to Frankfort from the Lower Rhine, being invited to treat an important case as oculist; the news was welcome to my parents and myself, and we offered him hospitality.

Herr von Lersner, a worthy man advanced in years, universally esteemed for his success in the education and training of young princes, and for his discreet behaviour both at court and when travelling, had been long afflicted with total blindness; yet he could not entirely relinquish the strong hope of obtaining some relief from his affliction. Now, for several years past, Jung, with much courage and pious boldness, had been operating successfully for cataract, and had gained wide-spread reputation throughout the districts of the Lower Rhine. His honesty of heart, his truthfulness of character, and genuine piety, won universal confidence; and his reputation gradually extended up the river through the medium of various trade connections. Herr von Lersner and his friends, upon the advice of an intelligent physician, resolved to send for the successful oculist, although a Frankfort merchant, in whose case the cure had failed, earnestly endeavoured to dissuade them. But what was one failure in the face of so many successful cases! So Jung came, attracted by the offer of a far more handsome remuneration than any to which he had been accustomed hitherto; he came to increase his reputation, full of confidence and in high spirits, and we congratulated

ourselves on the prospect of such a high-minded and cheerful inmate.

At last, after a preparatory treatment, the cataract upon both eyes was couched. Expectation was at its height. It was said that the patient saw the moment after the operation, until the bandage again shut out the light. But it was remarked that Jung was not cheerful, and that something weighed on his spirits; indeed, on further inquiry he confessed to me that he was uneasy as to the result of the operation. As far as my experience went, and I had witnessed several operations of the kind in Strasburg, these cases seemed usually absolutely simple; and Stilling himself had operated successfully a hundred times. After a painless piercing of the insensible cornea, the dull lens would, at the slightest pressure, spring forward of itself; the patient immediately discerned objects, and only had to wait with bandaged eyes, until the completed cure should allow him to use the precious organ at his own will and convenience. How many a poor man, on whom Jung had conferred this happiness, had invoked God's blessing and reward upon his benefactor, a reward which was now to be conferred on him by this wealthy patient!

Jung confessed to me that this time the operation had not been carried out so easily or so successfully; the lens had not sprung forward, he had been obliged to draw it out, and, indeed, as it had grown to the socket, to loosen it; and this had not been possible without using some force. He now reproached himself for having operated on the other eye as well. But Lersner and his friends had firmly resolved to have both couched at the same time, and when the unexpected emergency occurred, they did not immediately recover presence of mind enough to think what was best. In short, the second lens had not sprung forward spontaneously either, but had had to be loosened and drawn out with difficulty.

The pain felt by a mind so benevolent, so tender and devout in such a case, cannot be dwelt on or described, yet some general observations on his state of mind will not be out of place here.

To seek to advance his own moral culture, is the simplest and most practicable aim that any man can propose to

himself; the impulse is inborn in him; and in social life both love and reason prompt or rather constrain him to pursue it.

Stilling could only live in a moral religious atmosphere of love; without sympathy, without responsive kindness, life was impossible for him; he demanded mutual affection; where he was not known, he was silent; where he was only known, not loved, he was sad; accordingly he got on best with those well-disposed persons who can settle down for life in their assigned vocation and work steadily at self-improvement in their narrow but peaceful sphere.

Such characters as these are most successful in stifling vanity, in renouncing ambitious pursuits, in acquiring a circumspect address, and in preserving a uniformly friendly manner towards companions and neighbours.

In this class we can frequently trace an unenlightened mode of thought, subject to modifications in the individual; such persons, accidentally excited, attach great weight to the course of their experience; they consider everything a supernatural determination, in the conviction that God interferes directly in the affairs of this life.

With this is associated a certain disposition to abide in their present state, and yet at the same time to allow themselves to be pushed or led on, and a certain lack of independence in action. This indisposition to act for themselves is increased by the miscarriage of the wisest plans, as well as by the accidental success due to an unforeseen concurrence of favourable circumstances.

Now, since such a way of life is detrimental to all vigilant and manly action, it is well worth while to consider the mistaken course by which men come to fall into such a state.

The things on which minds of this type most love to dwell are those so-called awakenings and conversions, to which we will not deny a certain psychological value. Properly speaking, they fall under the heading of what is known in scientific and literary circles as an "*aperçu*," the perception, that is, of a great maxim, which is always a mental operation of genius; we arrive at it by pure intuition, that is, not by reflection, nor by learning or tradition. In the case before us it is the perception of moral power, which anchored upon faith, is conscious of a proud security in the midst of the storm.

Such an *aperçu* gives to the discoverer the highest joy,

because it points in a unique way to the infinite; it requires no length of time to work conviction; it leaps forth whole and complete in a moment; hence the quaint old French rhyme—

"En peu d'heure
Dieu labeure."

Outward events often occasion the violent outbreak of such conversions, and then people think them signs and wonders.

Love and confidence bound me very closely to Stilling; I had moreover exercised a good and happy influence on his life, and it was quite in accordance with his natural disposition, to treasure up in his tender grateful heart the remembrance of all that had ever been done for him; but situated as I was at that time his society neither benefited nor cheered me. I was glad to let everyone interpret and work out as he pleased the riddle of his days, but this method of ascribing to immediate divine interference all the good that comes to us by rational means in this life of accident and change, seemed to me too presumptuous; nor did I find any satisfaction in the habit of regarding the painful consequences of hasty actions and omissions, due to our own thoughtlessness or self-conceit, as a divine chastisement. I could, therefore, only listen to my good friend, but could not give him any very encouraging reply; still I readily allowed him to go his own way, like so many others, and as before often defended him when other worldly-minded men did not hesitate to wound his gentle nature. Thus I never allowed the malicious remark to come to his ears, made by a certain wit who once seriously exclaimed: "No, indeed! if I were as intimate with God as Jung is, I would never pray to the Most High for gold, but for wisdom and good counsel, that I might not make so many blunders which cost money and entail wretched years of debt."

And, indeed, this was no time for such offensive jests. Several days passed away between hope and fear; the latter grew, the former waned and, at last, vanished altogether; the eyes of the good patient sufferer had become inflamed, and left no doubt that the operation had failed.

The state of mind to which our friend was now reduced is not to be described; he was struggling against the deepest and worst kind of despair. For what had he not lost! In the first place, the warm thanks of a sufferer restored to sight —the noblest reward which a physician can enjoy; then the confidence of others needing similar help; then his worldly credit, while the interruption of his practice would reduce his family to helpless poverty. In short, we rehearsed the mournful drama of Job through from beginning to end, in which the faithful Jung took upon himself the part of the reproving friends. He chose to regard this calamity as the punishment of his former faults; it seemed to him that in interpreting his accidental discovery of this eye-cure as a divine call to that profession, he had acted wickedly and profanely; he reproached himself for not having thoroughly studied this important science, instead of lightly trusting his cures to good luck; what his enemies had said of him recurred again to his mind; he began to doubt whether it might not be true; and it pained him the more to find that in the course of his life he had been guilty of that levity which is so dangerous to devout minds, and also of presumption and vanity. In such moments he lost himself, and in whatever light we might endeavour to set the matter, at last we could only arrive at the rational and inevitable conclusion—that the ways of God are unsearchable.

My unceasing efforts to be cheerful would have been damped even more by Jung's visit, if I had not, according to my usual habit, made an earnest and kindly study of his state of mind, and explained it to myself in my own way. It vexed me not a little to see my good mother so poorly rewarded for her domestic care and pains, though she herself pursued her equable and active ways without ever perceiving it. I was most pained for my father. On my account he had, with a good grace, enlarged what had hitherto been a strictly close and private circle, and at table especially, where the presence of strangers attracted familiar friends and even passing visitors, he liked to indulge in a merry, even paradoxical humour, in which I would second him and draw from him many an approving smile, by all sorts of pugnacious dialectics: for I had an ungodly way of disputing everything; but I only persisted until I had succeeded in

making whoever was in the right look ridiculous. During the last few weeks, however, anything of the kind had been out of the question, for our friend, in the misery of this important failure, was beyond the reach of the most happy and cheering incidents, occasioned by some successful minor cures, and they entirely failed to give his gloomy mood another turn.

One incident in particular was most amusing. Among Jung's patients there was a blind old Jewish beggar, who had come from Isenburg to Frankfort, where in the extremity of wretchedness, he could barely find shelter or the meanest food and attendance; nevertheless his tough oriental nature helped him through, and he was in raptures to find himself perfectly healed and without the slightest suffering. When asked if the operation pained him, he said, in his hyperbolical manner, "If I had a million eyes, I would let them all be operated upon, one after the other, for half a *Kopfstück*." * On his departure he acted quite as eccentrically in the *Fahrgasse;* he thanked God, and in good Old Testament style, praised the Lord and the wondrous man whom He had sent. Crying out in this strain he walked slowly on through the long busy street towards the bridge. Buyers and sellers ran out of their shops, surprised by this singular exhibition of pious enthusiasm, venting itself passionately before the eyes of everyone; and he excited their sympathy to such a degree, that, without needing to beg a single alms, he was amply furnished with provisions for his journey.

This amusing incident, however, could hardly be mentioned in our circle; for though the poor wretch, in all his miserable poverty, in his sandy home beyond the Main, could be counted happy in the extreme, the man of wealth and dignity on this side of the river, in whom we were most interested, had missed the priceless relief so confidently expected.

It cut our good Jung to the heart to receive the thousand guilders, which, being stipulated in any case, were honourably paid by generous patients. This ready money was destined to liquidate, on his return, a portion of the debts, which

* A coin, with the head of the sovereign stamped upon it, generally worth four and a half groschen.—*Trans.*

added their burden to his other sad and unhappy circumstances.

And so he went off inconsolable, for he could not help thinking of his meeting with his care-worn wife, the changed manner of her parents, who, as sureties for so many debts of this over-confident man, might, however well disposed, consider they had made a mistake in the choice of a partner for their daughter. In this and that house, from this and that window, he could already see the scornful and contemptuous looks of those who, even when he was prosperous, had wished him no good; while the thought of a practice interrupted by his absence, and threatened with ruin by his failure, troubled him extremely.

And so we took our leave of him, yet not without some hope on our part; for his strong nature, sustained by faith in supernatural aid, could not but inspire in his friends a certain degree of tranquil confidence.

SEVENTEENTH BOOK

In resuming the history of my relations with Lili, I have to mention the many very pleasant hours I spent in her society, partly in the company of her mother, partly alone with her. On the strength of my writings, people gave me credit for knowledge of the human heart, as it was then called, and from this point of view our conversations invariably possessed ethical interest.

But how could we discuss our inner feelings without coming to mutual disclosures? So it was not long before, in a quiet hour, Lili told me the history of her youth. She had grown up in the enjoyment of all social advantages and worldly pleasures. She described to me her brothers, her relations, and all the circumstances of her life; only her mother remained in respectful obscurity.

Little weaknesses, too, were remembered; and among them she could not deny, that she had been made conscious of a certain power of attracting others, and, at the same time, of a certain tendency to drop them again. So in the course of our discussions we came at last to the important point, that she had exercised this power upon me, but had been punished for it, since she had been attracted by me also.

These confessions flowed from so pure and childlike a nature, that by them she made me entirely her own.

We were now necessary to each other, we had grown into the habit of seeing each other; but how many a day, how many an evening till far into the night, should I have had to deny myself her company, if I had not reconciled myself to seeing her in her own circle! This was a source of manifold pain to me.

My relation to her was that of one person to another—I looked upon her in her character of a beautiful, amiable,

highly accomplished daughter; it was like my earlier attachments, but was of a still higher kind. Of outward circumstances, however, of the inevitable constant mixing with society I had never thought. An irresistible longing possessed me; I could not be without her, nor she without me; but owing to her surroundings, and the interference of individual members of her circle, how many days were spoiled, how many hours wasted!

The history of pleasure parties which ended in displeasure; a dilatory brother, with whom I was to join the others, who would finish his business with the greatest leisureliness—whether from malice I do not know—and so spoiled the whole preconcerted plan; other appointments and failures to meet; impatience and disappointment—all these troubles, which, if set forth in greater detail in a romance, would certainly find sympathizing readers, I must here omit. However, to make this merely contemplative account more vivid, and to bring it within the range of youthful sympathy, I will here insert some songs, which though well known, are perhaps especially impressive in this connection.

"Heart, my heart, O, what hath changed thee?
What doth weigh on thee so sore?
What hath from myself estranged thee,
That I scarcely know thee more?
Gone is all which once seemed dearest,
Gone the care which once was nearest,
Gone thy toil and tranquil bliss,
Ah! how couldst thou come to this?

"Does that bloom so fresh and youthful,
That divine and lovely form,
That sweet look, so good and truthful,
Bind thee with resistless charm?
If I swear no more to see her,
If I man myself, and flee her,
Soon I find my efforts vain,
Forc'd to seek her once again.

"She with magic thread has bound me
That defies my strength or skill,
She has drawn a circle round me,
Holds me fast against my will.
Cruel maid, her charms enslave me,
I must live as she would have me,
Ah! how great the change to me!
Dear one, dear one, set me free!

"With resistless power why dost thou press me
Into scenes so bright?
Had I not—good youth—so much to bless me
In the lonely night?

"In my little chamber close I found me,
In the moon's cold beams;
And their quivering light fell softly round me,
While I lay in dreams.

"And by hours of pure, unmingled pleasure,
All my dreams were blest,
While I felt her image, as a treasure,
Deep within my breast.

"Is it I, she at the table places,
'Mid so many lights?
Yes, to meet intolerable faces,
She her slave invites.

"Ah! the Spring's fresh fields no longer cheer me,
Flowers no sweetness bring:
Angel, where thou art, all sweets are near me,—
Nature, Love, and Spring."

Whoever reads these songs attentively to himself, or, better still, sings them with feeling, must surely feel a breath of the fulness of those happy hours stealing over him.

But we will not take leave of that large and brilliant society, without adding some further remarks, especially in explanation of the close of the second poem.

She, whom I was accustomed to see only in a simple dress which was seldom changed for another, now stood before me in all the splendour of fashionable elegance; and yet it was still herself. Her grace and kindliness of manner remained as usual, only I should say her power of attraction was more conspicuous;—perhaps, because brought into contact with a number of persons, she seemed called upon to express herself with more animation, and display different sides of her character according as this or that person approached her. At any rate, I could not deny, on the one hand, that these strangers were in my way, while on the other I would not for a great deal have missed the pleasure of witnessing her social gifts, and of seeing that she was capable of taking her place in a wider and more public sphere.

Though decked with ornaments, it was still the same

breast that had opened to me its inmost secrets, and into which I could look as clearly as into my own; they were still the same lips that had so lately described to me the state of things amidst which she had grown up and spent her early years. Every look that we interchanged, every accompanying smile, bespoke a noble feeling of mutual intelligence, and I was myself astonished, here in the crowd, at the innocent secret understanding which had grown up between us in the most human and most natural way.

But with returning spring, the pleasant freedom of the country was to knit still closer these relations. Offenbach on the Main showed even then the beginnings of a considerable city, which promised to develop in the future. Beautiful and, for those times, splendid buildings were already erected. The largest of these was inhabited by Uncle Bernard (to call him by the name adopted by his family); extensive factories adjoined; d'Orville, an energetic young man of amiable qualities, lived opposite. Contiguous gardens and terraces, reaching down to the Main, and affording free egress in every direction into the lovely surrounding scenery, filled both visitors and residents with supreme content. The lover could not find a more desirable spot for indulging his feelings.

I lived at the house of JOHANN ANDRÉ; and since I have occasion to mention this man, who afterwards became well known, I must indulge in a short digression, in order to give some idea of the state of the Opera at that time.

In Frankfort, Marchand was at this time director of the theatre, and endeavoured by his personal efforts to raise it to the highest possible level. He was a fine man, handsome, tall, and in the prime of life; easy-going and gentle qualities appeared to predominate in his character; his presence on the stage, therefore, was agreeable enough. He had perhaps as much voice as was then considered requisite for the execution of the musical works of the day; accordingly he endeavoured to adapt to our stage the larger and smaller French operas.

He was particularly successful in the part of the father in Grétry's opera of *Beauty and the Beast*, and his rendering of the vision arranged at the back of the stage was exceedingly expressive.

This opera, successful in its way, approached however the lofty style, and was calculated to excite the tenderest feelings. On the other hand a spirit of realism had taken possession of the opera-house; operas representing different classes and crafts were brought out. *The Huntsmen*, *The Coopers*, and I know not what else, led the way; André chose the *Potter*. He had written the words himself, and as they belonged to him, had lavished his whole musical talent upon them.

I was lodging with him, and will only say what the present occasion demands of this facile poet and composer.

He was a man full of life and talent and had settled at Offenbach, primarily as a mechanician and manufacturer; he was something between the conductor of an orchestra and a dilettante. In the hope of meriting the former title, he made strenuous efforts to obtain a good standing as a musician; in the latter character he was inclined to repeat his own compositions endlessly.

Among the most active members of our circle at this time, who contributed most to enliven it, Pastor EWALD should be mentioned. In society he was an intellectual agreeable companion, while in private he quietly pursued the studies requisite for carrying on his profession, and in fact subsequently distinguished himself in the province of theology. Ewald, in short, was an indispensable member of our circle, being alike receptive and responsive.

Lili's pianoforte-playing completely fettered our good André to our society; what with instructing, conducting, and performing, there were few hours of the day or night in which he did not form one of the family circle or play a part at our social gatherings.

Bürger's *Leonore* had recently appeared, and had met with an enthusiastic reception from the Germans. André set it to music, and delighted to play it over and over again.

I, also, with my fondness for repeating pieces of poetry with animation, was always ready to recite it. People were not yet tired of the constant repetition of the same thing. When the company had their choice which of us they would rather hear, the decision was often in my favour.

All these varied social amusements served but to prolong

the intercourse of the lovers. They were insatiable, and between them both they easily managed to keep the good Johann André continually going, so that, by dint of repetition, his music often lasted till midnight. The two lovers thus secured for themselves the opportunity of being together which they prized so dearly.

If we walked out early in the morning, we found ourselves in the freshest air, though not in real country. Imposing buildings, which at that time would have done honour to a city; gardens, spreading before us, laid out in level flower-beds and ornamental borders; an unimpeded view across the river to its opposite banks; often, even at an early hour, a busy traffic on the water of passing rafts, quickly moving market-boats and skiffs—all forming a living world, gliding gently past us, in harmony with love's tender feelings. Even the lonely rippling of the waves and the rustling of the reeds in a softly flowing stream sounded refreshing, and never failed to cast a tranquillizing spell over those who approached the spot. A clear summer sky overarched the whole, and most pleasant was it to renew a loved companionship morning after morning in the midst of such scenes!

Should such a mode of life seem too gay and easy, or too frivolous to the earnest reader, let him consider that between the incidents, here narrated consecutively to make the description complete, there intervened whole days and weeks of privation, other engagements and occupations, and even insupportable tedium.

Men and women were busily engaged in their spheres of duty. I, too, out of regard for the present and the future, did not neglect to fulfil all my obligations, and still found plenty of time to obey the dictates of genius and passion.

The earliest hours of the morning I devoted to poetry; the middle of the day to worldly business, which was carried on in an original way. My father, who was a thorough and indeed philosophical jurist, managed himself such business as the care of his own property, and a connection with valued friends involved; for although his character as Imperial Councillor did not allow him to practise, he acted the part of legal adviser to many friends, while the

papers he prepared were signed by a regular advocate, who received a consideration for every such signature.

This activity of his had become greater rather than less by my association in it since my return, and it was easy to see that he thought more of my poetical gifts than of my practical capacity, and on that account made every effort to leave me time for my literary studies and productions. Sound and thorough, but slow of conception and execution, he would get up the case as a private barrister, and when we met to consult, he would state the case, and leave me to work it out, which I did with so much ease, that it caused him a father's purest joy, and once could not refrain from declaring, that, if I were not his own flesh and blood, he should envy me.

To lighten our work we had engaged a clerk whose character and individuality, if skilfully elaborated, might have adorned a romance. After his school-years, which had been profitably spent, and in which he had become fully master of Latin, and acquired other useful knowledge, a dissipated academic life had interfered with his career. He dragged on a wretched existence for a time in sickness and poverty, till at last he contrived to improve his circumstances by the aid of a fine handwriting and a quickness at accounts. Employed by some solicitors, he gradually acquired an accurate knowledge of the formalities of legal business, and by his honesty and accuracy made everyone he served his patron. He had been frequently employed by our family, and always gave assistance in legal matters and accounts.

This man now did his share of our constantly growing business, which consisted not only in legal affairs, but also in the execution of commissions, orders and forwarding-business. In the council-house he knew all the ways and byways; he was allowed his own place in both burgomasters' audiences; he had been well acquainted with many of the new senators, some of whom had quickly risen to the dignity of *Schöffen*, from the time of their first entrance into office, when their attitude was still that of doubtful hesitancy; in this way he had become to some extent the recipient of their confidence, and so acquired a sort of influence. All this he knew how to turn to the advantage of his patrons, and since the state of his health enjoined limits

on what he undertook, he was always found ready to execute every commission or order with care.

His presence was not disagreeable; he was slight in build, with regular features; his manner was unobtrusive, though something in his expression betrayed an assurance that he knew what had to be done; moreover, he was cheerful and dexterous in clearing away difficulties. He must have been well on in the forties, and (to repeat what I said before), I regret that I have never introduced him as the driving-wheel in the machinery of some novel.

Hoping that my more serious readers are now somewhat appeased by what I have just related, I will venture to turn again to those bright moments, when love and friendship shone in their fairest light.

It was natural to such social circles that all birthdays should be duly celebrated, with every variety of rejoicing; it was in honour of the birthday of Pastor Ewald, that the following song was written:—

"When met in glad communion,
When warm'd by love and wine,
To sing this song in union,
Our voices we'll combine,
Through God, who first united,
Together we remain:
The flame which once He lighted,
He now revives again."

Since this song has been preserved until this day, and there is scarcely a merry feast at which it is not joyfully revived, we commend it also to all who come after us, and wish to all who sing it or recite it the same delight and inward satisfaction which we then experienced, with no thought of any wider world, but forming our own world within our narrow circle.

It will, of course, be expected that Lili's birthday, which occurred for the seventeenth time on the 23rd June, 1775, was to be celebrated with peculiar honours. She had promised to come to Offenbach at noon; and I must admit that our friends, with a happy unanimity, had laid aside all customary empty compliments at this festival, and had prepared for her reception and entertainment only such heart-felt tokens as were worthy of her.

Busied with such pleasant duties, I saw the sun go down, announcing a bright day to follow, and presaging its glad beaming presence at our festival, when Lili's brother, George, who could not dissemble, entered the room somewhat rudely, and, without sparing our feelings, gave us to understand that to-morrow's intended festival was not to be; he himself could not tell why or wherefore, but his sister had bid him say that it would be wholly impossible for her to come to Offenbach at noon that day and take part in the intended festival; she had no hope of arriving before evening. She knew and felt most sensibly how annoying it must be to me and all our friends, but she begged me very earnestly to invent some excuse which might mitigate and perhaps prevent their disappointment at this news, which she left it to me to announce. If I did so, she would give me her warmest thanks.

I was silent for a moment, but I quickly recovered myself, and, as if by heavenly inspiration, saw what was to be done. "Make haste, George!" I cried; "tell her to make herself easy, and do her best to come towards evening; I promise that this very disappointment shall be turned into a cause of rejoicing!" The boy was curious, and wanted to know how. I refused to gratify his curiosity, notwithstanding that he called to his aid all the arts and all the influence which a brother of our beloved knows how to exercise.

No sooner had he gone, than I walked up and down my chamber with singular self-satisfaction; and, with the glad, gay feeling that here was a brilliant opportunity of proving myself her devoted servant, I stitched together several sheets of paper with beautiful silk, as befits an occasional poem, and hastened to write down the title:

"She Comes Not!

"A Mournful Domestic Tragedy, which, by the sore visitation of Divine Providence, will be represented in the most natural manner on the 23rd of June, 1775, at Offenbach-on-the-Maine. The action lasts from morning until evening."

I have neither the original nor a copy of this *jeu d'esprit* by me; I have often inquired for one, but have never been

able to find a trace of it; I must therefore compose it anew, which will not be very difficult.

The scene is laid in d'Orville's house and garden in Offenbach; the action is opened by the domestics, each of whom plays his special part, and evident preparations for a festival are going on. The children, drawn from life, run in and out among them; the master and mistress appear, actively discharging their appropriate functions; then, in the midst of the hurry and bustle, in comes neighbour Hans André, the indefatigable composer; he seats himself at the piano, and calls them all together to hear him try his new song, which he has just finished for the festival. He gathers the whole house round him, but all soon disperse again to attend to pressing duties; each one is called away by some one else, this person wants the help of that; at last, the arrival of the gardener draws attention to the preparations in the grounds and on the water; we see wreaths, and banners with most graceful inscriptions; nothing is forgotten.

While they are all assembled around the most attractive objects, a messenger enters, who, as a sort of humorous go-between, was also entitled to a part in the play, and who, by the extravagance of the tips given him, probably had a pretty shrewd suspicion as to the lady's and gentleman's feelings. He sets a high value on his packet, demands a glass of wine and a wheaten roll, and after some roguish hesitation hands over the telegram. The master of the house lets his arms drop, the papers fall to the floor, he calls out: "Let me go to the table! let me go to the bureau that I may *brush it away*."

The intellectual intercourse of vivacious persons is specially distinguished by a certain symbolical style of speech and gesture. A kind of slang is the result, which, while very amusing to the initiated, is unobserved by the stranger, or, if observed, annoys him.

Among Lili's most pleasing particularities was the one which is here expressed by the word and gesture of *brushing away*, and which she employed whenever anything disagreeable was said or told, especially when she sat at table, or was near any flat surface.

It had its origin in a most charming discourtesy, which

she once had recourse to when a stranger, sitting near her at table, said something unseemly. Without changing her sweet countenance, she brushed with her right hand, most prettily, across the table-cloth, and deliberately pushed on to the floor everything that obstructed this gentle motion. I know not what did not fall:—knives, forks, bread, salt-cellar, and also something belonging to her neighbour; everyone was startled; the servants hastened forward, and no one knew what it all meant, except the observant ones, who were delighted that she had rebuked and checked an impropriety in so pretty a manner.

Here then was a symbol found to express the rejection of anything disagreeable, such as occasionally crops up in respectable, honest, estimable, well-meaning, but not thoroughly polished society. We all adopted the motion of the right hand as a sign of reprobation; the actual brushing away of objects she herself afterwards indulged in only in moderation and with good taste.

When, therefore, the poet assigns to the master of the house, in dumb-show, this desire to brush away (a habit which had become second nature with us), the meaning and effectiveness of the action are at once apparent; for while he threatens to sweep everything from all flat surfaces, everybody tries to hinder and pacify him, till finally he throws himself exhausted on a seat.

"What has happened?" all exclaim. "Is she sick? Is anyone dead?" "Read! read!" cries d'Orville, "there it lies on the ground." The despatch is picked up; they read it, and exclaim: *She comes not!*

Their great alarm had prepared them for something worse;—after all she was well—nothing had happened to her! no one of the family was hurt; hope pointed still to the evening.

André, who had kept on with his music all the time, at last came running up, to console and to seek consolation. Pastor Ewald and his wife likewise came in quite characteristically, disappointed and yet reasonable, sorry for the disappointment and yet quietly accepting all for the best. Everything, however, was still at sixes and sevens, until the calm and exemplary Uncle Bernard finally appears, expecting a good breakfast and a comfortable dinner; and

he is the only one who sees the matter from the right point of view. He, by reasonable soothing speeches, sets all to rights, just like a god in Greek tragedy, who manages with a few words to solve the perplexities of the greatest heroes.

Thus far I wrote with rapid pen late at night, and gave it to a messenger with instructions to deliver it the next morning in Offenbach, precisely at ten o'clock.

Next day when I awoke, it was one of the brightest mornings possible, and, I set off just in time to arrive at Offenbach, as I purposed, precisely at noon.

I was received with the strangest charivari of salutations; the interrupted festival was scarcely mentioned; they scolded and rated me, because I had hit them off so well. The domestics were pleased at being introduced on the same stage with their superiors; only the children, those most decided and incorruptible realists, obstinately insisted that they had not talked like this, in fact that everything was quite different from the way in which it stood written in the play. I appeased them by some foretastes of the dessert, and they loved me as much as ever. A cheerful dinner-party, with some though not all of our intended festivities, put us in a mood to receive Lili with less splendour, but perhaps the more affectionately. She came, and was welcomed by cheerful, nay, merry faces, and was almost surprised that in spite of her absence so much cheerfulness was possible. They told her everything, laid the whole before her, and she, in her dear sweet way, thanked me as she alone could.

It required no remarkable acuteness to perceive that her absence from the festival in her honour was not accidental, but had been caused by gossip on the subject of our intimacy. However, this had not the slightest influence either on our sentiments or our behaviour.

At this season of the year there never failed to be a varied throng of visitors from the city. Frequently I did not join the company until late in the evening, when I found her apparently sympathetic; and since often I could only stay a few hours, I was glad of an opportunity to be useful to her in any way, by attending to or undertaking some commission, large or small, in her behalf. And

indeed service such as this is one of the greatest happinesses a man can experience; and it is of it that the old romances of chivalry tell in their obscure, but vigorous manner. There was no question that she ruled me, and she did well to exult in her power; for in this contest the victor and the vanquished both triumph, and enjoy an equal glory.

This repeated, though often brief appearance of mine in their circle, was all the more effective. Johann André had always a supply of music; I contributed new pieces either by others or myself; so that poetical and musical blossoms showered down upon us. It was a thoroughly brilliant time; a certain exaltation animated the company, and there were no dull moments. Without question this feeling was the outcome of our relation to one another, and thence communicated itself to the rest. For where inclination and passion show themselves in their natural boldness, they encourage timid souls, who begin to wonder why they should suppress their equally valid rights. Hence love affairs, hitherto more or less concealed, were now seen to develop without reserve; while others, which did not admit of open avowal, still meandered on pleasantly in the shade.

If, because of my multifarious avocations, I could not pass whole days in the country with her, yet the clear evenings gave us opportunity for prolonged meetings in the open air. Lovers will take pleasure in the following incident.

Ours was a condition of which it stands written: "I sleep, but my heart wakes." Light and darkness were alike to us; the light of the day could not outshine the light of love, and the night was turned into brightest day by the radiance of passion.

One clear starlight evening we had been walking about in the open country till it was quite late; and after I had seen her and her friends home to their several doors, and finally had taken leave of her, I felt so little inclined to sleep that I immediately set off on another ramble. I took the high-road to Frankfort, giving myself up to my thoughts and hopes; I seated myself on a bench, in the purest stillness of night, under the gleaming starry heavens, that I might belong only to myself and her.

My attention was attracted by a sound quite near me,

which I could not explain; it was not a rustling, nor a rushing noise, and on closer observation I discovered that it was under the ground, and caused by the working of some little animal. It might be a hedgehog, or a weasel, or whatever creature is in the habit of burrowing by night.

Having set off again towards the city and gone as far as the Röderberg, I recognized, by their chalk-white gleam, the steps which lead up to the vineyards. I ascended them, sat down, and fell asleep.

When I awoke, the dawn had broken, and I found myself opposite the high wall, which in earlier times had been erected to defend the heights on this side. Sachsenhausen lay before me, light mists marked the course of the river; it felt cool and pleasant to me.

There I waited till the sun, rising gradually behind me, lighted up the landscape lying before me. There lay the spot where I was again to see my beloved, and I returned slowly to the paradise where she still slept.

On account of my increasing circle of business, which, from love to her, I was anxious to establish and extend, my visits to Offenbach became more rare, and hence arose a somewhat painful predicament: it seemed as if I were neglecting and wasting the present for the sake of the future.

As my prospects were now gradually improving, I took them to be more promising than they really were, and I thought the more of coming to a speedy decision, since so public an intimacy could not go on much longer without causing embarrassment. And, as is usual in such cases, we did not expressly say so to one another; but the feeling of perfect mutual satisfaction, the full conviction that a separation was impossible, the confidence reposed by each in the other,—all this produced such a seriousness, that I, who had firmly resolved never again to become involved in a protracted connection of the kind, and who found myself, nevertheless, again in the trammels, without the certainty of a happy issue, was in truth beset with deep depression of spirit, and in the endeavour to shake it off I plunged more and more into uninteresting worldly affairs, from which I could only hope to derive profit and satisfaction at the side of my beloved.

In this strange situation, such as many others, no doubt, have painfully experienced, there came to our aid a certain lady who was a friend of the family, and possessed an intimate knowledge of all the persons and circumstances involved. She was called Mademoiselle Delf; she with her elder sister managed a little business in Heidelberg, and on several occasions had owed much to the kindness of the chief banking-house in Frankfort. She had known and loved Lili from her youth; she was a person of character, grave and masculine in appearance, with an even, firm, rapid step. She had had peculiar reason to adapt herself to the world, and hence she understood it, in a certain sense at least. She could not be called intriguing; she was accustomed to watch developments for a long time, and to keep her conclusions to herself: but then she had the gift of seeing an opportunity, and if she found people wavering betwixt doubt and resolution, when everything depended upon decision, she would bring such force of character to bear on the situation, that she seldom failed to accomplish her purpose. Properly speaking she had no selfish ends; to have accomplished something, to have carried something through, especially to have brought about a marriage, was reward enough for her. She had long since comprehended our position, and, in repeated visits, had carefully observed the state of affairs, so that she had finally convinced herself that the attachment must be encouraged; that our plans, good in intention, but not prosecuted with sufficient energy and resolution, must be promoted, and this little romance brought to a close as speedily as possible.

For many years she had enjoyed the confidence of Lili's mother. Introduced by me to my parents, she had made herself agreeable to them; for in an Imperial City, brusqueness of manner like hers is seldom offensive, and backed by cleverness and tact, is even welcome. She was fully acquainted with our wishes and our hopes; her love of doing something made her see in them a call upon her good offices; in short she entered into treaty with our parents. How she began it, how she removed the difficulties which must have stood in her way, I do not know; but she came to us one evening and brought the consent. "Take each

other by the hand!" cried she, in her pathetic, commanding manner. I stood opposite to Lili and offered her my hand; she, not indeed hesitatingly, but still slowly, placed hers in it. After a long breath we fell into each other's arms with deep emotion.

It was a strange decree of overruling Providence, that in the course of my singular history, I should also have experienced the feelings of one who is betrothed.

I may venture to assert, that for a moral man it is the pleasantest of all recollections. It is delightful to recall those feelings, which are difficult to express and almost inexplicable. The previous state of things is entirely changed; things before absolutely antagonistic are now reconciled, the most inveterate differences adjusted; the promptings of nature, the warnings of reason, tyrannizing impulses, and the dictates of reason, which before kept up a perpetual strife within us, all enter into friendly unity, and at the festival, so universally celebrated with solemn rites, that which was forbidden is commanded, and that which was penal is raised to an inviolable duty.

The reader will learn with approval that from this time forward a change took place in me. If my beloved had hitherto been regarded by me as beautiful, graceful, and attractive, now her worth and excellence claimed my respect and consideration. She was as it were a double person: her grace and loveliness belonged to me,—that I felt as before; but the dignity of her character, her self-reliance, her absolute reliability, remained her own. I beheld it, I comprehended it, I delighted in it as a store of wealth, the interest of which I was to share as long as I lived.

There is depth and significance in the old remark: no one remains long on the summit. The consent of the parents on both sides, obtained in such a characteristic manner by Demoiselle Delf, was considered final, without comment and without further formality. For as soon as something ideal—and in truth a betrothal such as ours merits the name—is brought face to face with reality, then when all seems to be settled, a critical time ensues. The outward world is utterly unmerciful, and rightly, for it must assert its authority once for all; the self-confidence of youthful passion is very great, but we see it only too often shattered

upon the rocks of opposing realities. A young couple who enter upon married life, unprovided with sufficient means, cannot look forward to a life of honeymoon bliss, especially in these latter times; the world immediately presses upon them with uncompromising demands, which, if not satisfied, make the young couple appear ridiculous.

Of the insufficiency of the methods which I had seriously adopted for the attainment of my end, I could not have been aware beforehand, because they would have been adequate up to a certain point; but now that the realization of my hopes was drawing nearer, I saw that matters were not quite what they ought to be.

The illusion which passion finds so convenient, was now exposed in all its inconsistency. My house, my domestic circumstances, had to be considered in all their details, in the light of sober common sense. It was true that the whole had been planned by my father with a view to a future daughter-in-law; but then what sort of a lady did he contemplate?

At the end of our third part, the reader made the acquaintance of the gentle, lovable, intelligent, beautiful, and gifted maiden, always the same, affectionate, yet free from passion; she was the fitting key-stone to the arch of which the piers were already built. But now, upon calm unbiassed reflection, it could not be denied that, in order to fit the newly acquired treasure into the niche left for it, a new arch would have to be built!

However this had not yet become clear to me, nor yet to her. But now when I tried to fancy myself bringing her to my home, somehow she did not seem to suit it exactly; just as when I went to her parties I had been obliged to change and re-change the style of my clothes for fear of appearing ridiculous by the side of those gay and fashionable worldlings. But no such change was possible in the domestic economy of a substantial burgher-house, rebuilt in accordance with an old-fashioned splendour which gave as it were a conservative character to the establishment.

Moreover, even after our parents' consent had been gained, it had not been possible to establish friendly relations or any intercourse between our respective families. Different religious opinions produced different habits; and

if the amiable girl had wished to continue her former mode of life, she would have found neither opportunity nor space in our moderate-sized house.

If I had never thought of all this till now, it was because I had been encouraged by the opening of good prospects away from Frankfort, which promised a chance of obtaining some valuable appointment. An enterprising man can take root anywhere; ability and talent create confidence; everyone thinks that a change of management is all that is needed. The importunity of youth finds favour, everything is thought possible to genius, whereas it can only do one particular thing.

The field of German intellectual and literary culture at this time presented the appearance of newly broken ground. Among business people there were far-sighted men, on the look out for skilful cultivators and prudent managers to till the unturned soil. Even the respected and well established Free Masons' Lodge, with whose most distinguished members I had become acquainted through my intimacy with Lili, found a fitting means of bringing me into touch with them; but, from a feeling of independence, which afterwards appeared to me madness, I declined all closer connection with them, not perceiving that these men, though forming a society of their own in a special sense, might yet do much to further my own ends, so nearly related to theirs.

I return to more personal matters.

In such cities as Frankfort, men often fill several offices at once, such as residentships, and agencies, the number of which may by energy be developed indefinitely. An opportunity of this sort now presented itself to me, and at first sight it seemed both advantageous and honourable. It was assumed that I was fitted for the place; and I should certainly have succeeded, if it could have commanded the co-operation of the Chancery triad already described. Thereupon we suppress our doubts; we dwell only on what is favourable; by violent efforts we overcome all wavering; a false position is thus created, without the vehemence of our passion being in the least moderated.

In times of peace there is no more interesting reading for the multitude than the public papers, which furnish early information of the latest doings in the world. By so doing

the quiet, comfortable citizen innocently develops a party spirit, which with our present limitations we neither can nor should get rid of. Every easy-going person thus feels an interest resembling that which people take in a wager: we experience an unreal gain or loss, and, like a play-goer, feel a very lively, though imaginary sympathy in the good or evil fortune of others. This sympathy often seems arbitrary, but it rests on moral grounds. For now we give to praiseworthy designs the applause they deserve; and now, carried away by brilliant successes, we are drawn towards those whose plans we should otherwise have censured. Abundant instances were furnished by the times of which I speak.

Frederick the Second, confident of his power, seemed to hold in his hand the fate of Europe and the world; Catherine, a great woman, who had proved herself every way worthy of a throne, provided able and highly favoured men with an ample sphere of action by extending the dominion of their Empress; and as this was done at the expense of the Turks, whose contempt for us we are apt to repay with interest, it did not seem a sacrifice of human life, when these infidels were slain by thousands. The burning of the fleet in the harbour of Tschesme caused universal rejoicings throughout the civilized world, and everyone shared in the arrogance of victory, the extravagance of which can be gauged by the fact that a warship was actually blown up in the Roads of Leghorn to provide a model for an artistic study, so that a true picture of that great event might be preserved. Not long after this, a young northern king, likewise acting on his own authority, seized the reins of government. The aristocrats whom he overthrew were not lamented, for aristocracy finds no favour with the public, since it is its nature to work in silence, and it is secure in proportion as it escapes observation; and in this case the people thought all the better of the young king, since in order to counterbalance the power of the higher ranks, he was obliged to favour the lower classes, and to conciliate their good will.

The lively interest of the world was still more excited when a whole people prepared to effect their independence. The same drama on a smaller scale had already been watched with interest: Corsica had long been the point towards which all eyes were directed; Paoli, when he saw his patriotic

designs frustrated, passed through Germany to England, and won all hearts. He was a handsome man, slight, fair, full of grace and kindliness; I saw him in Bethmann's house, where he stopped a short time, and received with cheerful cordiality the curious visitors who thronged to see him. But now similar events were to be repeated in a remote quarter of the globe; we wished the Americans all success, and the names of Franklin and Washington began to shine in the firmament of politics and war. Much had been accomplished to improve the condition of humanity, and now in France, a new and benevolent sovereign evinced the good intention of limiting his own action to the removal of many abuses and to the pursuit of the noblest ends, while he introduced a regular and efficient system of administration, dispensed with all arbitrary power, and ruled by law and justice alone; hence the brightest hopes spread over the whole world, and confident youth promised itself and all contemporaries a fair, nay glorious future.

All these events, however, interested me only so far as society at large took an interest in them; I myself and my immediate circle did not concern ourselves with the news of the day; our object was to get to know man; we were content to let people in general go their own way.

The tranquillized condition of Germany, of which my native town had formed a part for more than a century, had remained intact in spite of many wars and convulsions. The existence of the most varied social grades, including as they did the highest as well as the lowest, the Emperor as well as the Jew, instead of separating the various members, seemed rather to unite them; and this condition of things was conducive to a feeling of contentment. Even when the sovereign princes were subordinated to the Emperor, their electoral right and the prerogatives which it carried with it, and which they asserted, made them in a real sense his equals. But now the independent princes had become closely linked to the highest rank of royalty, so that, in view of their important privileges, they considered themselves equal in rank with the highest, indeed in a certain sense superior to them, since the spiritual electoral princes had precedence before all others, and, as scions of the hierarchy, claimed an undisputed place of honour.

When we call to mind the extraordinary additional powers which these ancient families further enjoyed with regard to chapter-houses, knightly orders, ecclesiastical associations, guilds and fraternities, it is not surprising that this numerous body of influential persons, who regarded themselves as a hierarchy of peers, passed untroubled days in well-ordered worldly activity, and without particular effort laid up for and bequeathed to their descendants a similar self-satisfaction. Nor was this class deficient in intellectual culture, for in the previous century the higher military and commercial education had made distinct advances: it had spread to the whole of aristocratic and diplomatic society, and, at the same time, had succeeded in awakening a general interest in literature and philosophy, and had given men a wide outlook, not altogether flattering to the existing state of things.

In Germany it had hardly occurred to anyone as yet to look with envy on this vast privileged class, or to grudge it its obvious worldly advantages. The middle classes had quietly devoted themselves to commerce and the sciences, and by these pursuits, as well as by the practice of the mechanical arts, so closely related to them, had raised themselves to a position of importance which fully compensated their political inferiority; the free or partially free cities encouraged their activity, so that members of these classes were enabled to lead a life of peace and comfort. The man who increased his wealth, or enhanced his intellectual influence, especially in matters of law or state, could always be sure of enjoying both respect and authority. In the Supreme Courts of the empire, and elsewhere, the bench of nobles was faced by one of learned lawyers; the freer, less restricted outlook of the one worked in friendly harmony with the deeper insight of the other; and not a trace of rivalry between them could be detected in every-day life. The noble felt secure in his exclusive and time-hallowed privileges, and the burgher felt it beneath his dignity to pretend to their possession by adding a prefix to his name.* The merchant and manufacturer had enough to do in trying to keep pace with other nations in their more rapid progress.

* The "von" which in Germany those who are ennobled prefix to their surnames.

Leaving out of account the usual temporary fluctuations, we may certainly say that it was on the whole a time of honest enterprise, unparalleled in the past and unlikely to continue long in the future, in consequence of the rise in prices at home and abroad.

My position with regard to the upper classes at this time was very favourable. In *Werther*, to be sure, unpleasantnesses arising on the border-line where two classes meet were referred to with some intolerance; but this was overlooked in consideration of the generally passionate character of the book, and it was obvious that the passage was not introduced with any special purpose in view.

But *Götz von Berlichingen* had set me quite right with the upper classes; whatever proprieties of the earlier literature I may have violated, I had depicted the old German social conditions with considerable learning and adroitness; at the head I had set the inviolable emperor, I had introduced various other grades of society, and I had depicted a knight who, in a time of general lawlessness, had determined as a single private individual to act uprightly, if not lawfully, and in consequence found himself in very sorry case. This complicated story, however, was not a mere fabrication, but founded on fact; it was bright and lifelike throughout, and consequently here and there betrayed a modern tone; but, nevertheless, the whole is permeated with the spirit which breathes in the life-story of the brave stout-hearted man as he tells it in his own words, and so perhaps not altogether impartially.

The family still flourished; its connection with the Frankish chivalry had remained in its integrity, although that connection, like much else dating from that time, may have grown somewhat indistinct and ineffective.

Now all at once the little stream of Jaxt, and the castle of Jaxthausen, acquired a poetic importance; travellers began to visit them, as well as the Town Hall at Heilbronn.

It was known that I had a mind to write about other episodes in the same period of history; and many a family, which could trace its origin back to that time, hoped to see its ancestors brought to the light in the same way.

A peculiar satisfaction is felt very generally when a writer recalls a nation's history to its recollection in an original

way; men rejoice in the virtues of their ancestors, and smile at failings, which they believe they themselves have long since overcome. Such a delineation never fails to call forth interest and applause, and in this way my play achieved a considerable success.

Yet it may be worth while to remark, that among the numerous advances made to me and the number of young persons who attached themselves to me, there was not a single man of rank; but on the other hand, many who had already arrived at the age of thirty sought me and visited me, their aims and endeavours inspired by the joyful hope of further fitting themselves to be serious members of their fatherland and a wider humanity.

At this time a general and active interest had sprung up in the period of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The works of ULRICH VON HUTTEN fell into my hands, and I was not a little struck to see something so similar to what had taken place in his time, again manifesting itself in our latter days.

The following letter of Ulrich von Hutten to Billibald Pyrkheimer, may therefore suitably find a place here:—

"What fortune gives us, it generally takes away again; and not only that—everything else which accrues to man from without is, we see, subject to chance. And yet I am now striving for honour, which I would fain obtain without ill will, or even in any fashion; for a fiery thirst for glory possesses me, so that I wish to rise to as high a rank of nobility as possible. I should make but a poor figure in my own eyes, dear Billibald, if, born in the rank, in the family I am, and of such ancestors, I could be content to count myself noble, though I had never ennobled myself by my own exertions. So great a work have I in my mind! my thoughts are higher! it is not that I wish to see myself promoted to a more distinguished and more brilliant rank; but I would fain seek a fountain elsewhere, whence I might draw a peculiar nobility of my own, and not be counted among the factitious nobility, contented with what I have received from my ancestors. On the contrary, I would add to those advantages something of my own, which might, from me, pass to my posterity.

"Therefore, in my studies and my efforts, I direct my

steps and proceed in opposition to the opinion of those who consider that whatever is suffices; for to me nothing of that sort suffices, and I have already confessed to you my ambition in this respect. And I here avow that I do not envy those who, starting from the lowest stations, have climbed higher than myself; for on this point I by no means agree with those of my own rank, who are wont to sneer at persons of a lower origin, who have, by their own ability, raised themselves to eminence. For with perfect right those are to be preferred to us, who have seized and made use of the means to glory, which we ourselves neglected; they may be the sons of fullers or of tanners, but they have attained their ends, in the face of greater difficulties than we have ever met with. The ignorant man, who envies another's distinction as a scholar, is not only to be called a fool, but is to be reckoned among the miserable —indeed among the most miserable; and our nobles, in particular, are afflicted with this infirmity which makes them look askance at such accomplishments. For what, in God's name, is the reason for our envying those who possess what we have despised? Why have we not applied ourselves to the law? why have we not ourselves this excellent learning, the best of arts? And now fullers, shoe-makers, and wheelwrights, have outrun us. Why have we forsaken our post, why left the most liberal studies to menials and (shame on us!) their dirty hands? Most justly has that heritage of nobility which we despised been seized by everyone possessed of skill and industry, and turned to profit by their diligence. Wretched beings that we are, who neglect that which suffices to raise the very humblest above us. Let us cease to envy, and strive also to obtain what others, to our deep disgrace, have claimed for themselves.

"Every longing for glory is honourable; all striving for excellence is praiseworthy. May every rank retain its own honour, and be decked with its own ornaments! I will not despise those ancestral portraits any more than the well-filled genealogical table; but whatever their worth may be, it does not belong to us, unless by our own merits we make it ours; nor can it endure, if the nobility do not adopt the manners which become them. In vain will yonder fat and corpulent head of a noble house point to the statues

of his ancestors, whilst he himself, in his inactivity, resembles a clod rather than the men who set him a shining example of manly virtue.

"So much have I wished most fully and most frankly to confide to you respecting my ambition and its nature."

Although, perhaps, not with the same rapid sequence of thought, yet manly and vigorous sentiments similar in purport were familiar to me from the lips of my more distinguished friends and acquaintances, and their results were evident in an honest activity. It had become a creed, that everyone must earn for himself a personal nobility, and if any rivalry showed itself in those hopeful times, it was those above that emulated those below them.

We others, on the contrary, had what we wished: the free and approved exercise of the talents bestowed on us by nature, so far at least as was compatible with our position as citizens of Frankfort.

For my native city held a peculiar position, and one which has not been enough considered. While the more northern of the Free Imperial Cities could boast of an extensive commerce, and the more southern ones, though of lesser commercial importance, owed their prosperity to art and manufacture, Frankfort on the Main exhibited a somewhat mixed character, combining the results of trade, wealth, and property in land and houses with the love of learning and the collection of works of art.

The Lutheran faith was the prevailing religion. The ancient lords of the *Gan*, who took their name from the house of Limburg; the house of Frauenstein, originally only a club, but during the troubles occasioned by the lower classes faithful to the side of enlightenment; the jurists and other members of the well-to-do and intelligent classes were all eligible for the magistracy; even those mechanics who had upheld the cause of order at a critical time, were admitted to the council, though excluded from advancement. The other institutions acting as checks on the constitution, the arrangements for carrying on the routine of government and all the offices connected with such a constitution, afforded many persons a sphere for their activity; while trade and manufacture, in so favourable a situation, could develop unhindered.

The higher nobility kept to itself, unenvied and almost unnoticed; a second class, pressing close upon it, was forced to be more active, and resting upon a solid foundation of wealthy old families, sought to distinguish itself by political and legal learning.

The members of the so-called Reformed persuasion composed, like the refugees in other places, a distinguished class, and when they rode out in fine equipages on Sundays to their service in Bockenheim, seemed to celebrate a sort of triumph over the citizen party, who had the privilege of going to church on foot in good weather and in bad.

The Roman Catholics were scarcely noticed; but they also were aware of the advantages which the other two denominations had appropriated to themselves.

EIGHTEENTH BOOK

RETURNING to literary matters, I must direct attention to a circumstance which had great influence on the German poetry of this period, and which is especially worthy of remark, because this same influence has lasted through the whole history of our poetic art to the present day, and will also make itself felt in the future.

From early times, the Germans were accustomed to rhyme; it had the advantage of favouring a very simple-minded procedure, in which it was scarcely necessary to do more than count the syllables. When, with the progress of civilization, attention began to be paid more or less instinctively to the sense and signification of the syllables, this was esteemed a merit, and many poets made it their own. The rhyme marked the close of the sentence; if the lines were short, even the minor divisions of the sentence were thus indicated, and a naturally refined ear provided for variety and grace. But now all at once rhyme was rejected, without considering that the value of the syllables had not as yet been decided, indeed that it was a difficult thing to decide. Klopstock took the lead. How earnestly he toiled and what he accomplished is well known. Everyone felt the uncertainty of the issue, they did not wish to run any risk, and, encouraged by the prevailing tendency to return to nature, they had recourse to a poetic prose. Gessner's extremely charming Idylls opened an endless vista. Klopstock wrote the dialogue of *Hermann's Schlacht* (Battle of Arminius) in prose, as well as *Der Tod Adams* (The Death of Adam). Under the influence of the domestic tragedies as well as the more classic dramas, a more lofty and impassioned style gained possession of the theatre; while, on the other hand, the iambic verse of five feet, in imitation of the English metre, was reducing poetry to prose. But

the requisites of good rhythm and rhyme could not be wholly neglected. Ramler, though proceeding on vague principles, was always severe towards his own productions, and could not help exercising the same severity towards those of others. He transformed prose into verse, altered and improved the works of others, by which means he earned little thanks and only confused the issues still more. Those writers succeeded best who still conformed to the old custom of rhyme with a certain observance of syllabic quantity, and, guided by a natural taste, observed laws still unformulated and undetermined; as, for example, Wieland, who, although inimitable, for a long time served as a model to mediocre poets.

But still at best the practice of writers remained uncertain, and there was perhaps no one, even among the best, who did not at some moment become confused. Hence the misfortune, that the real period of genius in our literary history produced little which, in its kind, could be pronounced correct; for here, also, the time was full of movement, stimulus, and energy, but not reflective and satisfying its own standard.

In order, however, to find a firm soil in which poetic genius might take root,—to discover an element in which it was possible to breathe freely, writers had turned their glance to a period some centuries back, in which thorough and excellent work stood in brilliant contrast to the general chaos surrounding it, and thus they became familiar with the poetic art of those times. The Minnesingers lay too far from us; we should have been obliged first to study the language, and that was not our concern, we wanted to live and not to learn.

Hans Sachs, the really masterly poet, appealed to us most. A man of true talent, not indeed a knight or courtier like the Minnesingers, but a plain citizen, such as we also boasted ourselves to be. A didactic realism suited us, and on many occasions we made use of his easy rhythm and the readily recurring rhyme. His manner seemed particularly suitable to such occasional pieces as we were hourly called upon to write.

Now if important works, which required the attention and labour of years or of a lifetime, were for trivial reasons constructed, more or less, upon such daring principles, it may be imagined what outrageous forms some other ephemeral productions assumed; for example, the poetical epistles, parables, and invectives of all kinds, with which we went on making war among ourselves, and seeking squabbles abroad.

Besides what has already been printed, some instances, though not very many, survive; they may as well be preserved. Brief notes will make their origin and purpose clearer to thinking men. Persons who take a deeper interest in such things, to whose notice these trifles may hereafter be brought, will please observe that an honest purpose lay at the bottom of them all, in spite of their extravagance. A sincere endeavour is at strife with presumption, nature with conventionalities, talent with formalism, genius with itself, energy with indecision, undeveloped excellence with developed mediocrity; so that the whole process may be regarded as a skirmish between advanced guards, following upon a declaration of war, and giving promise of a violent contest. For, strictly considered, the contest has not yet ended in all these fifty years; it is still going on, but on a higher plane.

I had, in imitation of an old German puppet play, planned a wild *extravaganza*, which was to bear the title of *Hanswursts Hochzeit* (Jack Pudding's Wedding).* The scheme was as follows:—Hanswurst, a rich young farmer and an orphan, has just come of age, and wishes to marry a rich maiden, named Ursel Blandine. His guardian, Kilian Brustfleck, and her mother Ursel, are delighted with the arrangement. Their long-cherished plans, their dearest wishes, are at last to be fulfilled and gratified. There is not the slightest obstacle, and the whole interest turns upon the delay to the fulfilment of the young people's ardent wishes, caused by the necessary arrangements and formalities of the occasion. The summoner to the wedding

* Hanswurst is the old German buffoon, whose name answers to the English "Jack Pudding."—*Trans.*

festivities enters as prologue, makes his usual hackneyed speech, and ends with the rhyme:

"The wedding feast is at the house
Of mine host of the Golden Louse."

To obviate the charge of violating the unity of place, the aforesaid tavern, with its glittering insignia, was placed in the background of the theatre; but arranged so that all its four sides could be presented to view, as though it were turned round on a pivot; and the front scenes had to be altered accordingly.

In the first act, the front of the house facing the street was turned to the audience, with its golden sign magnified as it were by the solar microscope; in the second act, the other three sides, which faced towards the garden, a little wood, and a lake respectively. The nearness of the lake gave rise to a prediction that in aftertimes the decorator would have little difficulty in making a wave dash over the whole stage right up to the prompter's box.

But all this does not reveal the real interest of the piece; for the comic element, which was carried to absurd lengths, consisted in the fact that the whole of the *dramatis personæ* were given traditional German nick-names and abusive appellations, which both indicated the characters of the individuals, and determined their relations to one another.

As we would fain hope that the present book will be read aloud in good society, and even in respectable family circles, we cannot venture, after the custom of every play-bill, to name our persons here in order, nor to cite such passages as show them most characteristically; although merry, droll, but harmless allusions and witty jokes could not fail to appear in the most natural manner. We add one leaf as a specimen, leaving our editors the liberty of deciding upon its admissibility.

Cousin *Schuft* (scamp), through his relationship to the family, was entitled to an invitation to the feast; no one had anything to say against it; for though he was a thoroughly good-for-nothing fellow, yet there he was, and since he was there, they could not very well leave him out; on such a feast-day, too, it would not do to remember that they had occasionally been displeased with him.

With Master *Schurke* (knave), the case was more serious; he had, indeed, been useful to the family, when it was to his own profit; but on the other hand, he had injured it, perhaps, also with an eye to his own interests; perhaps, because he found it convenient. Those who were in any degree prudent voted for his admission; the few who would have excluded him, were out-voted.

But there was a third person, about whom it was still more difficult to decide; a well-behaved person in society, like other people, obliging, agreeable, useful in many ways; he had the single failing, that he could not bear his name to be mentioned, and as soon as he heard it, was instantaneously transported into a heroic fury, like that which the Northmen call *Berserker-rage*, would attempt to kill every one near him, and in his frenzy would hurt others and be hurt himself; indeed the second act of the piece is made by him to end in dire confusion.

Here was an opportunity, which I could not allow to pass, for chastising the piratical publisher Macklot. He is introduced going about hawking his Macklot wares, and when he hears of the preparation for the wedding, he cannot resist the impulse to go spunging for a dinner, and to stuff his ravening maw at other people's expense. He announces himself; Kilian Brustfleck inquires into his claims, but is obliged to turn him away, since it is understood that all the guests are to be well-known public characters, to which distinction the applicant can lay no claim. Macklot does his best to show that he is as renowned as any of them. But Kilian Brustfleck, a strict master of ceremonies, shows himself immovable; whereupon the nameless person, who has recovered from his Berserker-rage at the end of the second act, espouses the cause of his near relative, the piratical publisher, with such pirate-like zeal, that the latter is finally admitted among the guests.

About this time the Counts Stolberg arrived at Frankfort; they were on a journey to Switzerland, and wished to pay us a visit. The earliest productions of my dawning talent, which appeared in the Göttingen *Musenalmanach* had led to my becoming intimately acquainted with them, and with all those other young men whose characters and works

are now well known. At that time rather strange ideas were entertained of friendship and love. At the back of them lay our exuberant youth, leading us to unburden our hearts to one another and show our inner selves, full of possibilities but still immature. Such a mutual relation, which looked like confidence, was mistaken for love and genuine affection; I, as well as others, was deceived in this and suffered from the consequences in more ways than one for many years. There is still in existence a letter of Bürger's belonging to that time, which shows that this set of men paid no heed to moral and æsthetic considerations. Everyone was full of excitement, and thought that he might act and poetize accordingly.

The brothers arrived, bringing Count Haugwitz with them. They were received by me with an open heart and easy propriety. They lodged at the hotel, but generally shared our meals. The first joyous meeting proved highly gratifying; but troublesome eccentricities soon manifested themselves.

A unique relation between them and my mother was soon established. In her straightforward fashion she was at once able to realize mediæval conditions and to think of herself as the *aja* * of some Lombard or Byzantine princess. They invariably called her Frau Aja, and she was pleased with the joke; entering the more heartily into our youthful fancies, as she had already recognized her own portrait in Götz von Berlichingen's wife.

But this state of things was not to last long. We had dined together but a few times, when, after a bottle or so of wine, our poetic hatred for tyrants showed itself, and we avowed a thirst for the blood of such villains. My father smiled and shook his head; my mother had scarcely heard of a tyrant in her life, however she recollected having seen the engraving of such a monster in Gottfried's Chronicle, viz., King Cambyses, who boasts of having shot an arrow through the heart of the little son of an enemy before his father's face; this had remained in her memory. To give a cheerful turn to the conversation, which went on growing more violent, she betook herself to her cellar, where her oldest wines lay carefully preserved in large

* The derivation from *aja* = governess is incorrect. The name is taken from the story of the Four Sons of Aymon.

casks. There she had in store no lesser treasure than the vintages of 1706, '19, '26, and '48,—all under her own especial watch and ward,—which were seldom broached except on solemn festive occasions.

As she set before us the rich-coloured wine in the cut-glass decanter, she exclaimed: "Here is true tyrants' blood! Feast upon this, but let no murderous thoughts come near my house!"

"Yes, tyrant's blood indeed!" I cried; "there is no greater tyrant than the one whose heart's blood is here set before you. Regale yourself with it; but use moderation! for beware lest he subdue you by his spirit and pleasant taste. The vine is the universal tyrant who ought to be rooted up; let us therefore choose and reverence as our patron saint the holy Lycurgus, the Thracian; he set about the pious work in earnest, but was blinded and corrupted by the infatuating demon Bacchus, and therefore deserves to stand at the head of the list of martyrs.

"This vine-stock is the vilest of tyrants, at once a hypocrite, flatterer, and oppressor. The first draughts of his blood are sweet to the taste, but one drop irresistibly tempts another to follow it; they succeed each other like a string of pearls, which one fears to cut."

If any should suspect me here of substituting, as the best historians have done, a fictitious speech for the actual conversation, I can only express my wish that a short-hand writer had taken down this peroration on the spot and preserved it for us. The thoughts would be found the same, but the flow of language perhaps more graceful and attractive. In general, the present sketch is lacking in the diffuse eloquence and exuberance which belong to our youth, when we are conscious of our powers but do not know whither to direct them.

In a city like Frankfort, one is placed in a strange position; strangers continually meeting there, tell of every region of the globe, and awaken a passion for travel. On many previous occasions I had shown readiness to seek other surroundings, and now at the very moment when it was important to find out whether I could live without Lili—when a painful restlessness unfitted me for all regular business, the proposition of the Stolbergs, that

I should accompany them to Switzerland, was welcome. Encouraged by my father's approval, who looked with pleasure on the idea of my travelling in that direction, and advised me to cross over into Italy, if a suitable occasion should offer itself, my mind was quickly made up, and I soon had everything packed for the journey. With vague intimations but without leave-taking, I parted from Lili; she had so grown into my heart, that I did not seem to be going from her.

In a few hours I found myself with my merry fellow-travellers in Darmstadt. At the court there we were still expected to behave with perfect propriety; here it was really Count Haugwitz who took the lead. He was the youngest of us all, well-built, of a refined, noble appearance, with gentle, kindly features, of an equable disposition, sympathetic, but with so much moderation, that, compared with the others, he appeared quite impassive. Consequently, he had to put up with all sorts of jibes and nicknames from them. This was all very well, so long as they believed that they might act like children of nature; but as soon as the occasion called for propriety, and we were again obliged, not unwillingly, to resume our proper characters, he would then manage to arrange and smooth over everything, so that we always came off with tolerable credit, if not with distinction.

I spent my time, meanwhile, with Merck, who in his Mephistophelian manner looked upon my intended journey with an evil eye, and described my companions, who had paid him a visit, with a relentless penetration. In his way he knew me thoroughly; my naïve and indomitable good nature was a grief to him; the everlasting letting things go their own way, the live and let live was his detestation. "It is a stupid plan," he said, "your going with these lads;" and then he would describe them aptly, but not altogether justly. Throughout there was a want of kindly feeling, and this made me think I could see further than he did, although I did not in fact do so, but only knew how to appreciate those sides of their character which lay outside his horizon.

"You will not stay long with them!" was the sum of his remarks. On this occasion I remember a remarkable saying of his, which he repeated to me at a later time, and which

I often repeated to myself, and frequently found confirmed in life. "Your dim, but unswerving endeavour," said he, "is to give a poetic form to the real; others seek to give reality to the so-called poetic, to the imaginative, and of that nothing will ever come but stupid stuff." Whoever apprehends the immense difference between these two modes of procedure, whoever insists and acts upon this conviction, has gained enlightenment on a thousand other things.

Unhappily, before our party left Darmstadt, an incident happened which tended to confirm beyond dispute Merck's opinion.

Among the follies of the time arising from the notion that people should endeavour to live in a state of nature, was the habit of bathing in cold water in the open air; and here, too, our friends, after conforming to necessary proprieties, could not resist this temptation. Darmstadt, lying in a sandy plain without running water, must have had some pond in its vicinity, of which I only heard in this connection. The friends, naturally hot and apt to make themselves yet hotter, sought refreshment in this pool; the sight of naked youths in bright sunshine was probably regarded as a singular one in this district. At any rate there was a scandal. Merck became more cutting in his inferences, and I must confess to having hastened our departure.

Even before we reached Mannheim, in spite of all the good and noble feelings we had in common, a certain dissonance in opinion and behaviour became apparent. Leopold Stolberg declared passionately that he had been compelled to terminate an ardent love affair with a beautiful Englishwoman, and that it was on this account that he had undertaken such extensive travels. When he was sympathetically informed that another member of the company was no stranger to such feelings, he burst out with youthful exaggeration that his devotion, his sufferings, no less than the beauty and charm of his lady-love, were not to be equalled by anything in the world. When an attempt was made to pacify his vehemence by reasonable arguments, as became our good fellowship, the situation only became more strained, and Count Haugwitz as well as myself in the end saw good to drop the subject. Arrived at Mannheim, we established ourselves in comfortable rooms

in a respectable inn. At dessert after our first dinner, at which the wine had been passed freely, Leopold called upon us to drink to the health of his Fair One, which we did with considerable noise. After we had drained our glasses, he exclaimed, "Such hallowed goblets shall never be drunk out of more; a second toast would be desecration; let us therefore destroy these vessels!" and forthwith flung his wine-glass behind him against the wall. The rest of us followed his example, and I felt as if Merck plucked me by the collar.

However, young people preserve the childlike trait of bearing no malice against good comrades: their ingenuous attachment may receive an unpleasant shock, but it cannot be deeply wounded.

The glasses thus proclaimed sacred had considerably swelled our reckoning; however, we proceeded to Carlsruhe, gaily and lightheartedly, there to enter a new circle, with all the confidence of youth and its freedom from care. There we found Klopstock, who still maintained with dignity his ancient authority over disciples who held him in reverence. I also gladly did homage to him, so that when bidden to court with the others, I probably conducted myself tolerably well for a novice. One felt to some extent called upon to be natural and at the same time dignified.

The reigning Margrave, highly honoured among the German Sovereigns as one of their senior princes, but more especially on account of his excellent aims as a ruler, was glad to converse about matters of political economy. The Margravine, actively interested in the arts and various useful branches of knowledge, endeavoured to express her sympathy with us in graceful speeches; for which we were duly grateful, though when at home we could not refrain from making fun of her miserable paper-manufactory, and the favour she showed to the piratical bookseller Macklot.

The circumstance, however, of most importance for me, was, that the young Duke of Saxe-Weimar had arrived here to enter into a formal matrimonial engagement with his noble bride, the Princess Louisa of Hesse-Darmstadt; President von Moser had already arrived, in order to discuss this important contract with the court-tutor Count Görtz, and complete the agreement. My conversations

with both royal personages were most friendly, and at the farewell audience, they both gave me repeated assurances that it would be pleasant to them to see me soon at Weimar.

In some private conversation Klopstock showed me so much kindness that I was led to use openness and candour with him. I communicated to him the latest scenes of *Faust*, which he seemed to approve of; indeed, I afterwards heard that he had spoken of them to others with marked commendation, a thing not usual with him, and expressed a wish to see the conclusion of the piece.

Our former rudeness, sometimes called the demeanour of genius, was kept within bounds in Carlsruhe, with its dignified and almost sacred associations. I parted from my companions, as I had resolved to branch off from our route and go to Emmendingen, where my brother-in-law was high bailiff. I looked upon this visit to my sister as a real trial. I knew that her life was not a happy one, while neither she, nor her husband, nor their circumstances appeared to be to blame. Her character was peculiar and difficult to discuss; we will, however, endeavour to summarize here whatever is possible to say about her.

She was happy in possessing a fine figure, but not good features, which, though they clearly expressed goodness, intelligence, and sympathy, were nevertheless wanting in regularity and charm.

Added to this, a high and strongly arched forehead, thanks to the unpleasing fashion of combing the hair tightly back from the face, produced a somewhat unpleasant impression, although it bore the best testimony to her moral and intellectual qualities. I can fancy, that if, after the modern fashion, she had surrounded the upper part of her face with curls, and adorned her temples and cheeks with ringlets, she would have been more pleased with the reflection in her mirror and have had no fear of displeasing others any more than herself. Further, there was the misfortune that her skin was seldom clear, a defect which from her youth up, by some demoniacal fatality was sure to show itself on all festal occasions, such as concerts, balls, and other parties.

She had gradually overcome these drawbacks, and at the same time her other splendid qualities had developed more and more.

A firm character not easily controlled, a soul that sympathized and needed sympathy, a highly cultivated mind, fine acquirements and talents; some knowledge of languages and a ready pen—all these she possessed, so that if she had been favoured with outward charms, she would have been among the women most sought after in her day.

Besides all this there is one strange thing to be mentioned: there was not the slightest sensuality in her nature. She had grown up with me, and had no other wish than to continue and end her life in this brotherly and sisterly harmony. Since my return from the University we had been inseparable; with the most unreserved confidence we shared all our thoughts, feelings and fancies, and the impressions produced by every chance incident. When I went to Wetzlar, her loneliness seemed unbearable; my friend Schlosser, who was neither a stranger nor uncongenial to her, stepped into my place. In him, unfortunately, brotherly affection changed into a decided, and, judging by his strictly conscientious character, probably a first passion. Thus what people call a very suitable match presented itself, and my sister, after having steadfastly rejected several good offers, from insignificant men, whom she detested, allowed herself, as it seems to me, to be persuaded.

I must frankly confess that whenever I indulged in fancies about my sister's destiny, I did not like to think of her as the mistress of a house, but rather as an Abbess, or the Lady Superior of some noble community. She possessed every requisite for such a high position, while she was wanting in what the world deems indispensable. Over women she always exercised an irresistible influence; young minds were gently attracted towards her, and she ruled them by virtue of her mental superiority. As she shared my universal tolerance for the good and human, with all its eccentricities, provided it was unperverted, there was no need to conceal from her any idiosyncrasy which might mark unusual natural gifts, or for its owner to feel any constraint in her presence; hence our parties, as we have seen before, were always varied, easy,

well-behaved, though occasionally somewhat daring in character. My habit of associating with young ladies in a respectful and courteous way, without any resultant feeling of being definitely bound or appropriated, was entirely due to her. And now the intelligent reader, who is capable of reading between these lines, will be able to form some conception of the grave feelings with which I set foot in Emmendingen.

But at my departure, after a short visit, a still heavier load lay on my heart, for my sister had earnestly recommended, not to say enjoined on me, to break off my connection with Lili. She herself had suffered much from a protracted engagement: Schlosser, with his conscientiousness, was not formally betrothed to her, until he was sure of his appointment in the Grand Duchy of Baden, indeed, until he was practically appointed. The final arrangement, however, was delayed in an incredible manner. If I may express my conjecture on the matter, the excellent Schlosser, able man of business as he was, was on account of his downright integrity not particularly acceptable, either as a servant, in direct contact with the Prince, or, still less, as a colleague, closely associated with the ministers. The appointment at Carlsruhe which he had expected and anxiously desired was not made. But the delay was explained to me, when the place of high bailiff in Emmendingen became vacant, and he was instantly selected for it. Thus an office of much dignity and profit was intrusted to him, for which he had shown himself fully competent. This position of complete independence seemed entirely suited to his taste and character; it enabled him to act according to his own convictions, and to be held responsible for everything, whether it brought him praise or blame.

As no objections could be raised to his accepting this appointment, my sister had to follow him, not indeed to a court-residence, as she had hoped, but to a place which must have seemed to her a lonely desert; to a dwelling, spacious enough, with its stately official dignity, but without opportunities of social intercourse. Some young ladies, with whom she had cultivated an early friendship, followed her there, and as the Gerock family was blessed with several

daughters, these arranged to stay with her in turn, so that, whilst forgoing so much, she was solaced by the presence of at least one long-trusted friend.

These circumstances and experiences made her feel justified in recommending to me, most earnestly, a separation from Lili. She thought it cruel to snatch such a young lady (of whom she had formed the highest opinion) from her varied, if not brilliant sphere, and shut her up in our old house, which, although very passable in its way, was not suited for the reception of distinguished society, setting her down, as it were, between a well-disposed, taciturn, but didactic father, and a mother extremely active in domestic matters, who, her day's work done, did not like to be disturbed, as she sat placidly sewing and engaged in comfortable conversation with select young friends whom she had attracted to her.

On the other hand, she put Lili's position clearly and vividly before me; for, partly in my letters, partly in confidential conversation, I had, with a lover's garrulousness, made her acquainted with everything, down to the smallest detail.

Unfortunately the picture she drew was only a circumstantial and well-meant amplification of what a gossiping friend, in whom we gradually ceased to trust, had contrived to insinuate into her mind by a few significant hints.

I could promise her nothing, although I was obliged to confess that she had convinced me. My heart was full of that feeling of suspense which suffices to feed love; for the child Cupid clings obstinately to the garment of Hope, even when she is preparing to hasten away with resolute footsteps.

The only thing between this place and Zurich which I now clearly remember, is the Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen. A mighty cascade here gives the first indication of the mountainous region which we designed to enter; where, by a series of ascents, each steeper and more difficult than the last, we were gradually and toilsomely to reach the heights.

The view of the lake of Zurich, which we enjoyed from the gate of the "Sword Inn," is still before me; I say from the gate of the inn, for, without stopping to enter it, I hastened to Lavater. He gave me a cheerful and cordial reception, and

was, I must confess, charming beyond measure; affectionate, considerate, diffusing happiness and goodness; indeed, it would be impossible to imagine him otherwise. His wife, with a somewhat singular, but serene and devout expression of countenance, was, like everything else about him, in complete harmony with his way of thinking and living.

Our first, and almost uninterrupted theme of conversation, was his "*Physiognomik.*" The first part of this remarkable work, was, if I mistake not, already printed, or at least, near completion. It might be said to be at once stamped with genius and yet empirical; methodical, but still a mere collection of instances. My connection with the work was a strange one. Lavater wanted all the world to be his co-operators and sympathizers. During his travels up the Rhine, he had portraits taken of a great many distinguished men, in order to excite their personal interest in a work in which they were to appear. He proceeded in the same way with artists; he called upon every one to send him drawings for illustrations. The drawings arrived, and many were not exactly suited for his purpose. So, too, he had copper-plates engraved right and left, and these rarely proved characteristic. On his side he had expended much labour; much money and efforts of every kind had been devoted to the preparation of the great work; and full honour was done to Physiognomy. When the result came to be embodied in a single volume, and Physiognomy, founded on learning and illustrated by examples, was to lay claim to the dignity of a science: it was found that not a single illustrative table said what it ought to say; all the plates had to be censured or to be accepted with qualifications, none to be praised, but only tolerated; many, indeed, were rendered nugatory by the explanations. For me, who in all my studies sought a firm footing before going further, the task I had to perform was one of the most painful ever imposed upon me. Let the reader judge. The manuscript, with impressions of the plates inserted, was sent to me at Frankfort. I was authorized to strike out whatever displeased me, to change and put in what I liked. However I made a very moderate use of this liberty. In one instance he had introduced a long and violent controversial passage

against an unjust critic, which I left out, and substituted a cheerful poem about nature; for this he scolded me, but afterwards, when he had cooled down, approved of what I had done.

Whoever glances through the four volumes of the Physiognomy, and (he will not regret it) reads them, may conceive the interest of our interviews. Most of the plates contained in the book were already drawn, and part of them had been engraved. These we examined, deciding which were to be utilized, and considered ingenious devices by which those that did not fulfil the purpose for which they were intended, might yet be made instructive and therefore be inserted.

If I now look through the work of Lavater once again, a happy feeling of amusement comes over me; it seems as if I saw before me the shadows of men formerly well-known to me, who once caused me annoyance, and in whom I ought not to take pleasure now.

The possibility, however, of retaining in some sort, much that otherwise would have been unsuitable, was due to the rare and decided talent of the artist and engraver, Lips. He was, in fact, born for the representation of the actual in prosaic form, which was precisely what was wanted in this case. As the physiognomist made strange demands in the work done for him, Lips was obliged to be very careful in carrying out his master's injunctions; the clever peasant-boy felt the whole responsibility of working for a clerical gentleman from a city of such political importance, and did his part with the greatest care.

Living in a separate house from my companions, I became every day more of a stranger to them, without the least unpleasant feeling having arisen; our rural excursions were no longer made together, although in the city we still kept up some intercourse. With all the arrogance of young counts they had honoured Lavater with a visit, and appeared to the skilful physiognomist in a light somewhat different from that in which they were regarded by the rest of the world. He spoke to me about them, and I remember quite well, that, speaking of Leopold Stolberg, he exclaimed: "I do not know what you all mean; he is a noble, excellent youth, and full of talent; but you have described him to me

as a hero, as a Hercules, and I have never in my life seen a softer and more sensitive young man; nor, if need be, one more easily influenced. I am still far from unerring physiognomical perception, but as for you and all the rest, you are in a sad plight."

Since Lavater's journey on the Lower Rhine, the public interest in him and his physiognomical studies had greatly increased; people whom he had met were anxious to return his civility; hence he had numerous callers, and felt some embarrassment in being regarded as the first among spiritual and intellectual men, and the chief attraction for strangers. Hence, to avoid envy and all unpleasant feelings, he managed to remind and urge his visitors to treat other distinguished men with courtesy and respect.

In this regard especial attention was paid to the aged BODMER, and, accordingly, we were compelled to visit him and pay our youthful respects to him. He lived on a hill, above the large or old town, which lay on the right bank, where the lake contracts its waters into the Limmat. We traversed the old town, and, following a path that became steeper and steeper, at last ascended the height behind the walls, where, between the fortifications and the old wall, a pleasant suburb, still rural in aspect, had sprung up, consisting partly of rows of detached houses. The house where Bodmer had passed his whole life stood in a very open and pleasant situation, which, the day being beautiful and clear, we had paused on our road to survey with the greatest pleasure.

We were conducted up a flight of steps into a wainscoted chamber, where a brisk old man, of middle stature, came to meet us. He received us with his usual greeting to young admirers; telling us that we must consider it an act of courtesy on his part to have delayed so long his departure from this world in order that he might receive us kindly, make our acquaintance, take pleasure in our talents, and wish us joy in our future careers.

We, on the other hand, congratulated him that, while as a poet belonging to a patriarchal world, and yet living close to the most highly cultivated city, he had all his life long possessed a truly idyllic dwelling, and, in high, free air, had so many years been able constantly to feast his eyes on such a view.

It seemed to please him when we asked permission to enjoy the view from his window of the neighbouring scenery; and truly the prospect in the cheerful sunshine, and at the best season of the year, appeared quite incomparable. The prospect commanded much of the slope, from the great town down to the water's edge, as well as the smaller town across the Limmat, and the whole of the fertile Sihlfeld, towards the west. Behind us, on the left, was a part of the lake of Zurich, with its bright rippling surface, and its endlessly varied shores, with alternating hill and valley and height after height, in greater variety than the eye could take in. Dazzled by this splendour, we gazed with ardent longing at the blue range of the loftier mountains in the distance, whose snowy summits we fancied we could identify.

Our youthful rapture at sight of the marvellous beauty which, for so many years, had daily been before him, appeared to please the old poet; he became, so to speak, ironically sympathetic, and we parted the best of friends, but not before a yearning for those blue mountain heights had taken possession of our souls.

Now that I am on the point of leaving our worthy patriarch, I notice, for the first time, that I have as yet said nothing of his form and countenance, of his movements, and his demeanour.

In general, I do not think it quite right for travellers to make an inventory of the person of every distinguished man they visit, as though supplying the details needed by the police for his identification. No one sufficiently considers that he has looked at the great man only during the moment of introduction, and then only in his own way; and that according to the circumstances of the moment the host may or may not be what he seemed, proud or humble, silent or talkative, cheerful or morose. In this particular case, however, I may excuse myself from the attempt, by saying that no verbal description of Bodmer's venerable person would convey an adequate impression. Fortunately there exists a picture of him by Bause, after Graff, which represents the man perfectly, just as he appeared to us, with his look of contemplative meditation.

A special joy was in store for me at Zurich, where I met

my young friend, Passavant. This meeting was not a surprise to me, but rather a pleasure I had looked forward to eagerly. Of a respectable family of the reformed persuasion, belonging to my native city, he lived in Switzerland, the home of the doctrines which he was afterwards to proclaim as a preacher. With a frame not large, but active, his face and his whole manner bespoke a quick and attractive decision. His hair and beard were black, his eyes full of animation. He gave the impression of a man of ready sympathy and well-regulated activities.

Scarcely had we embraced one another and exchanged the first greetings, when he immediately proposed to me to visit the smaller cantons. He had himself experienced great delight on a walk through them, and wished now to awaken my rapture and enthusiasm by showing them to me.

While I had been discussing the most interesting and important topics with Lavater until we had nearly exhausted our common interests, my lively fellow-travellers had already sallied forth in various directions, and explored the country after their own fashion. Passavant, who welcomed me with hearty friendship, believed that he had thus gained a right to the exclusive possession of my society, and, therefore, in the absence of my companions, succeeded in enticing me to the mountains, the more easily, as I had a strong inclination to accomplish the long-desired ramble in the greatest quiet and in my own way. We, therefore, took ship and sailed up the glorious lake, on a fine clear morning.

A poem inserted here may give the reader some idea of those happy moments :

"New draughts of strength and youthful blood,
From this free world I've press'd ;
Here nature is so mild, so good—
Who clasps me to her breast.
The billows rock our little boat,
The oars in measure beat,
The hills, while clouds around them float,
Approach our barque to meet.

"Eye, mine eye, why sink'st thou mourning?
Golden dreams, are ye returning?
Though thou'rt gold, thou dream, farewell ;
Here, too, life and love can dwell.

"Countless stars are blinking,
In the waters here,
On the mountains drinking,
Clouds of mist appear;
Round the cool bay flying,
Morning breezes wake,
Ripen'd fruits are lying
Mirror'd in the lake."

We landed in Richterswyl, where we had an introduction from Lavater to Doctor HOTZE. He enjoyed great esteem in his immediate neighbourhood and in the whole country as a physician, and an extremely intelligent and benevolent man, and we can do no better honour to his memory than by referring to a passage in Lavater's Physiognomy, which describes him.

After very hospitable entertainment, and having been most charmingly and profitably instructed as to the next stages in our journey, we ascended the mountains behind Richterswyl. When we were about to descend again into the vale of Schindellegi, we turned round to impress upon our minds the charming view over the lake of Zurich.

Of my feelings at that moment some idea may be gathered from the following lines, which I wrote then and which are still preserved in a little memorandum book:—

"Dearest Lili, if I did not love thee,
I should revel in a scene like this!
Yet, sweet Lili, if I did not love thee,
What were any bliss?"

This little impromptu seems to me more expressive in its present context, than where it stands in the printed collection of my poems.

The rough roads, which led to Maria-Einsiedeln, could not daunt our good spirits. A number of pilgrims, whom we had remarked below upon the lake, now overtook us, keeping time with their steps to their hymns and prayers. We saluted them and let them pass, and while seeming to invite us to share their holy purpose, they lent a picturesque and characteristic animation to the solitary heights. We saw the winding path which we too had to travel marked out by a stream of living beings, and seemed to find

encouragement in the sight. For the customs of the Romish Church are in every way significant and impressive to the Protestant, inasmuch as he only recognizes what is primal and profound in them, to which they owe their existence, and what is human in them, to which they owe their transmission from generation to generation. Thus he goes straight to the kernel, without troubling himself for the moment about the husk, the pod, or even about the tree itself, its twigs, leaves, bark, and roots.

We now saw, rising in a dreary treeless vale, the splendid church and the monastery, surrounded by a neat-looking colony, with its wide and stately precincts for the suitable accommodation of so large and varied an assembly of guests.

The little church within the church, the former hermitage of the saint, incrusted with marble, and transformed as far as possible into a regular chapel, was new to me, something I had never seen before—this little sanctuary, surrounded and built over with pillars and arches. It could not but excite serious thoughts to reflect how a single spark of goodness and of the fear of God, had here kindled a bright and ever-burning flame, to which bands of believers would make toilsome pilgrimages in order to light their little tapers at its holy fire. Be that as it may, it points to a boundless craving in man for the same light, for the same warmth, which this old hermit cherished and enjoyed in profoundest feeling and most confident conviction. We were shown into the treasure chamber, which was rich and imposing enough, and offered to the astonished eye life-size, not to say colossal, busts of saints and founders.

A very different feeling was awakened at the sight of a closet next shown us. It was filled with antique valuables presented to the monastery, and now objects of veneration. My eyes were attracted to various golden crowns of remarkable workmanship, among which one seemed to call for special attention. It was a spiked crown, in the style of former days, such as one might have seen in pictures on the heads of ancient queens, but of a most tasteful design and of infinitely painstaking workmanship. The coloured stones with which it was studded were distributed over it or set opposite to each other with great effect and judgment; in

short, it was a work which one would pronounce perfect at the first glance, without being able to explain one's impression by an appeal to the laws of art.

In such cases, where the art is not understood, but felt, heart and soul desire to make practical use of the object; one would like to possess the jewel, that one might impart pleasure to others with such a gift. I begged permission to handle the little crown, and as I held it up respectfully in my hand, I could not help thinking that I should like to press it upon Lili's shining tresses, lead her before the mirror, and witness her delight in her own beauty and the happiness which she spread around her. I have often thought since, that this scene, pourtrayed by a skilful painter, would make an extremely interesting and touching picture. It were worth one's while to be the young king to receive a bride and a new kingdom in this way.

In order to show us all the treasures of the monastery, they led us into a cabinet of natural and artificial curiosities. I had then but little idea of the value of such things; at that time geognosy, which is a valuable science in itself, but apt to dissipate the impression produced by the earth's beautiful surface on the mind's eye, had not begun to entice me, still less had a fantastic geology entangled me in its labyrinths. Nevertheless, the monk who acted as our guide, compelled me to bestow some attention on a fossil, much prized as he said by connoisseurs: a small wild boar's head well preserved in a lump of blue fuller's clay, which, black as it was, has dwelt in my imagination ever since. It had been found in the neighbourhood of Rapperswyl, a district which ever since the memory of man had been boggy, and therefore likely to swallow up and preserve such mummies for posterity.

An attraction of a very different kind was presented to me by an engraving of a picture by Martin Schön, framed and kept under glass, representing the Assumption of the Virgin. True, only a perfect specimen can give an idea of the art of such a master; but then we are so impressed —as we are by whatever is perfect of its kind—that we can never rid ourselves of the wish, however long a time may elapse, to possess something like it, to be able to feast our eyes on it again and again. Why should I not anticipate

and confess here, that I could not rest until at a later date I succeeded in obtaining an excellent copy of this plate.

On the 16th of July, 1775 (for here I find the date entered for the first time), we began a toilsome walk; wild, stony heights were to be surmounted, in the midst of perfect solitude and wildness. At a quarter to eight in the evening, we were opposite the Schwyzer-Hacken, two mountain peaks towering into the sky side by side. For the first time we found snow upon our path, and on the jagged peaks before us it had lain since the winter. A primeval forest, with its solemn awe, filled the immense ravines, into which we were about to descend. Refreshed, after a short rest, we sprang, with bold and light step, from cliff to cliff, from ledge to ledge, down the precipitous foot-path, and arrived by ten o'clock at Schwyz. We had become at once weary yet light-hearted, exhausted yet excited; we precipitately quenched our violent thirst, and felt ourselves still more inspired. Imagine the young man who but two years before had written *Werther*, and his still younger friend, who had read and been fired by that wonderful work while still in manuscript, both, unconsciously and involuntarily, transported, as it were, into a state of nature, with vivid remembrance of past emotions, giving free play to those of the present, weaving plans which would never be realized; and in the consciousness of easy power revelling in the realm of fancy;—picture them thus and you have some idea of our state of mind, which I could not have described but for the note in my diary: "Laughter and jubilation lasted until midnight."

On the morning of the 17th, we saw the Schwyzer-Hacken from our windows. Up these vast and irregular natural pyramids rose clouds upon clouds. At one in the afternoon we left Schwyz, on our way to Rigi; at two, glorious sunshine on the Lowerzer lake. From sheer delight we saw nothing. Two sturdy maidens managed the boat; it was a pretty sight, and we did not interfere. We arrived at the island, on which they say the tyrant of former times used to live; be this as it may, the hut of the anchorite has now found a corner amid the ruins.

We climbed the Rigi; at half-past seven we reached

the "Mother of God in the Snow"; then passed the chapel and the monastery, and rested at the Ox Inn.

On the 18th, Sunday morning early, sketched the chapel from the Ox. At twelve to Kaltenbad, or the Fountain of the Three Sisters. By a quarter-past two we had reached the summit; we found ourselves in the clouds, this time doubly disagreeable to us, since they spoiled the view and drenched us with mist. But when, here and there, they opened and showed us emerging and changing pictures of a clear, glorious, sun-lit world, set in a rolling frame, we ceased to complain; for it was a sight we had never seen before and should never behold again, and we lingered long, in spite of our discomfort, to catch, through the chinks and crevices of the ever-shifting masses of cloud, some little point of sunny earth, some narrow strip of shore, or tiny corner of the lake.

By eight in the evening we were back again at the door of the inn, and refreshed ourselves with baked fish and eggs, and plenty of wine.

As twilight and then night gradually came on, our ears were filled with mysteriously harmonizing sounds; the tinkling of the chapel bells, the splashing of the spring, the rustling of changeful breezes, with the forest horns in the distance;—these were blessed, tranquillizing, soothing moments.

On the 19th, at half-past six in the morning, first up the mountain, then down to the Lake of Lucern, to Viznau; thence, by water, to Gersau. At noon, we were in the Lake Hotel. About two o'clock we were opposite the Grütli, where the three Tells conspired; then past the flat rock on to which the hero sprang from the boat, and where the legend of his life and deeds is immortalized by a painting. At three we were at Flüelen, where he embarked; and at four in Altorf, where he shot the apple.

Aided by this poetic thread we are guided aright through the labyrinth of these rocky walls which, descending perpendicularly to the water, stand silently before us. They, the immovable, stand there as quietly as the side-scenes of a theatre; success or failure, joy or sorrow, belong alone to the persons who come and go day by day on the stage.

Such reflections, however, were wholly beyond the

horizon of the youthful travellers; recent events had been dismissed from their thoughts, and the future lay before them as strangely inscrutable as the mountains they were trying to explore.

On the 20th, we started for Amstäg, where they cooked us a savoury meal of baked fish. Here now, on this remote mountain ledge, where the Reuss rushes out of still more rugged clefts, and dashes the cool snow-water over clean shelving pebbles, I could not help enjoying the longed-for opportunity of refreshing myself in the foaming waves.

At three o'clock we proceeded onwards; a row of sumpter-horses went before us, we walked with them over a wide stretch of snow, and did not learn till afterwards, that it was hollow underneath. The winter snow had collected here in a mountain gorge, which at other seasons it was necessary to skirt, and now provided a shorter and more direct road. But the waters which forced their way beneath had gradually hollowed out the snowy mass, and the mild summer air had melted more and more of the underside of the vault, so that now it resembled a broad arched bridge, forming a natural connection between the opposite sides. We convinced ourselves of this strange freak of nature by venturing into the broader part of the gorge from the upper end. As we kept ascending, we left below us the pine forests in the chasm, through which the Reuss from time to time appeared, foaming and dashing over rocky precipices.

At half-past seven we arrived at Wasen, where, to render the red, heavy, sour Lombardy wine drinkable, we were forced to have recourse to water, and to supply, by a great deal of sugar, the ingredient which nature had refused to produce in the grape. The landlord showed us some beautiful crystals; but I had, at that time, so little interest in the study of natural history, that I did not care to burden myself with these mountain products, in spite of their cheapness.

On the 21st, at half-past six, we were still ascending; the rocks grew more and more stupendous and awful, and the path to the *Teufelstein* (Devil's Stone), from which we were to gain a view of the Devil's Bridge, more and more arduous. My companion was disposed for a rest, and proposed

that I should sketch the grand views. My outlines were, perhaps, tolerably successful, but nothing seemed to stand out, nothing to recede into the distance; for such subjects I had no language. We toiled on further; the immensity and wildness of the scene seemed to be intensified, plains became mountains, and hollows chasms. And so my guide conducted me to the cave of Ursern, through which I walked with some disgust; what we had seen thus far was, at any rate, sublime, this darkness put an end to everything.

But the cunning guide had anticipated the joyful astonishment which would surprise me on my egress. There the stream, now foaming less wildly, wound gently through a level vale surrounded by mountains, but wide enough to invite habitation. Above the clean little village of Ursern and its church, which stood opposite to us on a level plot, rose a pine-wood, which was held sacred, because it protected the inhabitants at its foot from the avalanches which fell from the heights above. The fresh green meadows of the valley were adorned along the river-side with low-growing willows; and we enjoyed the sight of vegetation, which we had not seen for so long. There was a great feeling of peace; upon the level paths we felt our powers revive again, and my fellow-traveller was not a little proud of the surprise which he had so skilfully contrived.

The meadows produce the celebrated Ursern cheese, and the youthful travellers, in high spirits, partook of very tolerable wine with great relish, in order to heighten their enjoyment yet more, and to give a more fantastic exaltation to their projects.

On the 22nd, at half-past three, we left our quarters, and quitted the smooth Ursern valley for the stony Liviner valley. Here, too, we at once missed all vegetation: nothing but naked or mossy rocks covered with snow, fitful gusts blowing the clouds up and past us, the rushing of waterfalls, the tinkling of sumpter-horses in the depth of solitude, where we saw neither those coming towards us nor those going from us. It did not need any great effort of the imagination to see dragons' nests in the clefts. But, nevertheless, we felt inspired and elevated by one of the most beautiful and picturesque waterfalls, sublime in all the variety of its many cascades, which, swollen at this

time of the year by melted snows, and now half hidden by the clouds, now half revealed, chained us for some time to the spot.

Finally, we came to little cloud-lakes, as I might call them, since they were scarcely to be distinguished from streaks in the sky. Before long, a building loomed towards us out of the vapour: it was the Hospice, and we felt great satisfaction at the thought of finding shelter beneath its hospitable roof.

NINETEENTH BOOK

Announced by the low barking of a little dog which ran out to meet us, we were cordially received at the door by an elderly but active female. She apologized for the absence of the Reverend Father, who had gone to Milan, but was expected home that evening; and immediately, without more words, she set to work to provide for our comfort and wants. We were shown into a warm and spacious room; bread, cheese, and some passable wine were set before us, and we were promised an adequate supper. The surprises of the day were again talked over, and my friend was not a little proud that all had gone off so well, and that we had passed a day, the impressions of which neither poetry nor prose could ever reproduce.

At length with the late twilight the venerable Father entered the room, greeted his guests with kind and cordial dignity, and in a few words ordered the cook to pay all possible attention to our wishes. When we expressed our surprise that he could like to pass his life up here, in the midst of such perfect solitude, far from all society, he assured us that he never lacked company, as our own welcome visit might testify. A lively trade, he told us, was kept up between Italy and Germany. This continual traffic brought him into relations with the leading mercantile houses. He often went down to Milan, less often to Lucerne, from which place, however, the houses which had charge of the posting over this main route frequently sent young people to him, who required to be instructed, at this frontier-spot, in all the circumstances and occurrences connected with this business.

Amid such varied conversation the evening passed away, and we spent a peaceful night on somewhat short sleeping-places, fastened to the wall, and more like shelves than bedsteads.

Rising early, I soon found myself under the open sky, but in a narrow space surrounded by tall mountain-peaks. I sat down upon the foot-path which led to Italy, and attempted, after the manner of dilettanti, to draw what could not be drawn, still less make a picture, namely, the nearest mountain-tops, whose sides, made visible by the melting snow, showed white furrows and black ridges. Nevertheless, that fruitless effort has impressed the picture indelibly on my memory.

My companion stepped briskly up to me, and began: "What do you say to the story of our reverend host, last evening? Are not you as well as I, fired with a desire to descend from this dragon's height into those charming regions below? A ramble through these ravines must be glorious and not toilsome; and if it should end at Bellinzona, what a joy that would be! The words of the good Father have brought the isles in Lago Maggiore vividly before my mind's eye. We have heard and seen so much of them since Keyssler's Travels, that I cannot resist the temptation."

"Is it not the same with you too?" he resumed; "you are sitting on exactly the right spot; I stood there once, but had not the courage to run down. You can go on at once, wait for me at Airolo, I will follow with the courier when I have taken leave of the good Father and settled everything."

"Such a step," I replied, "without any preparation, does not suit me." "What's the use of deliberating so much?" cried he; "we have money enough to get to Milan, we shall be able to get credit; through our fairs, I know more than one mercantile friend there." He grew still more urgent. "Go!" said I, "and make everything ready for our departure, then we will decide."

In such moments it seems to me as if a man has no power of making a decision in himself, but is rather governed and determined by earlier impressions. Lombardy and Italy lay before me, an altogether foreign land; on the other side Germany, familiar, beloved, full of kindly, home-like scenes, and where—let me confess it—that which had so long entirely enchained me, and on which my existence was centred, remained even now the most indispensable element, beyond the limits of which I felt afraid to step. A little golden heart, which in my happiest hours, I had received

from *her*, still hung warmed by love about my neck, suspended by the same ribbon with which she had attached it. I took it in my hand and kissed it. This incident gave rise to a poem, which I here insert:—

"Round my neck, suspended, as a token
Of those joys, that swiftly pass'd away,
Art thou here that thou may'st lengthen love's short day,
Still binding, when the bond of souls is broken?

"Lili, I fly from thee; yet I am doom'd to feel
Thy fetters still,
Though to strange vales and mountains I depart,
Yes, Lili's heart must yet remain
Attached to *my* fond heart.

"Thus the bird, snapping his string in twain,
Seeks his wood,—his own,
Still a mark of bondage bearing,
Of that string a fragment wearing.
The old—the free-born bird—he cannot be again,
When once a master he has known."

Seeing my friend with the guide, who carried our knapsack, come rushing up, I rose hastily and removed from the spot where I had been standing near the edge of the precipice, lest he should drag me down into the abyss with him. I also saluted the pious Father, and turned, without saying a word, to the path by which we had come. My friend followed me, somewhat reluctantly, and in spite of his love and attachment to me, kept for a time some distance behind, till at last the glorious waterfall brought us again together for the rest of our journey, and what had been once decided, was from henceforth looked upon as wisest and best.

Of our descent I will only remark that we now found the snow-bridge, over which we had calmly travelled with a heavy-laden train a few days before, entirely collapsed, and that now, as we had to take a longer route through the opened gorge, we were filled with astonishment and admiration by the colossal fragments of nature's architecture.

My friend could not quite get over his disappointment at not going into Italy; very likely he had thought of the plan some time before, and with affectionate strategy had hoped to surprise me at the right spot. On this account

our return did not proceed so merrily; but I was occupied all the more constantly on my silent route with trying to fix, at least in its more comprehensible and characteristic details, that sense of the sublime and vast, which is apt to dwindle in our minds with the lapse of time.

Not without many new and renewed emotions and reflections did we pass over the remarkable heights above the lake of Lucerne on our way to Küssnacht, where we landed and pursued our ramble in order to greet Tell's chapel by the roadside, and to reflect upon that assassination which, in the eyes of the whole world, was so heroic, patriotic, and glorious. We also crossed Lake Zug, which we had seen in the distance from the Rigi. In Zug, I only remember some painted glass, inserted in the casement of a room in the inn, not very large, but excellent in its way. Our route then led over the Albis into the Sihl valley, where we visited a young Hanoverian, von Lindau, who enjoyed living there in solitude; we tried by this means to soothe the annoyance he had felt some time before in Zurich, at my declining the offer of his company not in the most friendly or polite manner. The jealous friendship of the worthy Passavant was really the reason of my declining the companionship of a man I really liked, but whom it would have been inconvenient to have with me at that time.

But before we descend again from these glorious heights to the lake and to the pleasantly situated city, I must make one more remark upon my attempts to carry away some idea of the country by drawing and sketching. A habit from youth upward of viewing a landscape as a picture led me, whenever I observed any picturesque scene in nature, to try and fix it, and so preserve a lasting memento of such moments. But having hitherto only exercised myself on less ambitious subjects, I soon felt my incompetency in such surroundings.

Eagerness and haste combined forced me to adopt a singular expedient: no sooner had I noticed an interesting subject, and given in a few strokes the vaguest possible indication of it on paper, than I would elaborate the detail, which was beyond the power of my pencil, in words by the side of the sketch, and, by this means, make the scenes so thoroughly present to my mind, that afterwards, whenever I

needed any of the scenes for a poem or a story, it would hover before my eyes, ready to be utilized.

On returning to Zurich, I found the Stolbergs were gone; their stay in this city had been cut short in a singular manner.

It must be confessed that travellers on quitting the restraints of home, are only too apt to think they are stepping not only into an unknown world, but also one of absolute freedom,—a delusion which it was the more easy to indulge in at this time, as there were as yet no passports to be examined by the police, no custom-house duties, and similar annoyances, to remind people that abroad they are subject to worse and more painful restraints than at home.

If the prevailing aspiration of the time to realize the freedom of nature be borne in mind, it will not be difficult to pardon these ardent young souls, who regarded Switzerland as the very place in which to "idyllize" their fresh young lives. The tender poems of Gessner, as well as his charming etchings, seemed decidedly to justify this attitude of mind.

In fact, bathing in wide waters seems to be one of the best preparations for such poetic expressions of feeling. Upon our journey out, such natural exercises had not seemed exactly suitable to modern customs, and we had, in some degree, abstained from them. But, in Switzerland, the sight of the stream and its pervasive moisture,—flowing, running, falling, then gathering on the plain, and gradually spreading out to a lake,—presented a temptation that was not to be resisted. I will not deny that I joined my companions in bathing in the clear lake, but we chose a spot far enough, as we supposed, from all human eyes. But naked bodies shine a long way off, and whoever chanced to see us doubtless took offence.

The well-meaning youths who saw no harm in appearing half naked, like bucolic swains, or entirely naked, like heathen deities, were admonished by their friends to abjure such practices. They were given to understand that they were living, not in primeval nature, but in a land where it was esteemed right and desirable to adhere to the old institutions and customs which had been handed down from

the middle ages. They were not disinclined to acknowledge the propriety of all this, especially as appeal was made to the middle ages, which, to them, had the sanctity of a second nature. Accordingly, they left the more public shores of the lake, and found in their walks through the mountains such clear, rushing, cooling streams, that it seemed impossible, in the middle of July, to refuse the refreshment they offered. Thus, in the course of their long rambles, they came to the shady vale, where the Sihl, coming from the back of the Albis, hurls itself down and empties its waters into the Limmat below Zurich. Far from every habitation, and even from trodden foot-paths, they thought there could be no objection to their throwing off their clothes here, and boldly breasting the foaming waves. It was true this was not done without loud shouts, for, excited by the cool plunge and the delight they felt, they gave themselves up to wild jubilation, by which they thought to consecrate these thickly wooded rocks as background to an idyllic scene.

But, whether persons previously ill-disposed had tracked them, or whether this poetic tumult called forth adversaries even in the solitude, cannot be determined. Suffice it to say, stone after stone was thrown at them from the silent bushes above, whether by one or more, whether accidentally or purposely, they could not tell; however, they thought it most prudent to quit the exhilarating water and look for their clothes.

No one was hit; the only injury sustained was the moral one of surprise and annoyance, and full of young life as they were, they soon forgot all about it.

But the most disagreeable consequence fell upon Lavater, who was blamed for having given friendly welcome to such bad, bold youths, for having arranged walks with them, and otherwise shown attentions to persons whose wild, unbridled, unchristian, and even heathenish ways, had caused such scandal in a civilized and well-regulated neighbourhood.

Our reverend friend, however, well-skilled in smoothing over such occurrences, contrived to hush up this one also, and after the departure of these meteoric travellers, we found, on our return, peace and quiet restored.

In the fragment of Werther's travels, which has lately been reprinted in the sixteenth volume of my works, I have attempted to describe this contrast between the commendable order and legal restraint of Switzerland and that life of nature demanded by youthful delusion. But, as people are apt to take all that the poet casually states for his decided opinions, or even didactic censure, so the Swiss were very much offended at the comparison, and I therefore dropped the intended continuation, which was to have shown in some sort Werther's progress up to the epoch of his sorrows, and would therefore certainly have been interesting to students of human nature.

Arrived at Zurich, I devoted my time almost exclusively to Lavater, whose hospitality I again claimed. The Physiognomy, with all its portraits and caricatures, weighed more and more heavily on the shoulders of the worthy man. We arranged everything as well as we could under the circumstances, and I promised him, on my return home, to continue my assistance.

I was led to give this promise by the unlimited confidence of youth in my own quickness of comprehension, and still more by a feeling of my ready adaptability; but, as a matter of fact, the way in which Lavater dissected physiognomies was not at all in my line. The impression which the man had made upon me at our first meeting, determined, in some degree, my relation to him, although a general wish to oblige, which was natural to me, together with the lightheartedness of youth, played a yet greater part, and caused me to see things in a somewhat hazy atmosphere.

Lavater's mind was an exceedingly striking one; in his society it was impossible to resist being definitely influenced by him, and I had no choice but to observe foreheads and noses, eyes and mouths, individually, and consider their relations and proportions. My seer friend did this from necessity, in order to account to himself for what he perceived so clearly; but to me it always seemed a mean trick, a piece of espionage, to attempt to analyze a man before his face, and so discover his hidden moral peculiarities. I preferred to listen to his conversation, in which he revealed himself at will. So, too, I must confess to always feeling a certain apprehensiveness in Lavater's

presence; for, while by his art of physiognomy, he possessed himself of our peculiarities, he also made himself, by conversation, master of our thoughts, which, with a little sagacity, he would easily guess as we talked.

Any one strongly conscious of an inner power of synthesis, has properly the right to analyze, since he uses the external details to test and verify his inner conception of the whole. Let me give one instance of Lavater's method of procedure.

On Sundays, after the sermon, it was his clerical duty to hold the short-handled, velvet alms-bag before each person as they went out, and devoutly acknowledge the pious gift. Now, this particular Sunday he proposed not to look at any of the persons, but only to observe their hands, and from them to judge of the forms of their owners. Not only the shape of the fingers, but their expression in dropping the gift, did not escape his notice, and he had much to communicate to me about the conclusions he had formed. How instructive and stimulating must such conversations have been to any one like myself, who was also seeking to qualify himself as a depictor of men!

Often in my after-life I had occasion to think of Lavater, who was one of the noblest of those with whom I formed so intimate a relation. The following notes referring to him were accordingly written at various times. In consequence of our divergent tendencies, we gradually became strangers to each other, and yet I was anxious not to lose the impression which his worth had left upon me. I would often recall him to my mind, and thus arose these leaves, which, as they were written independently of one another, may contain repetition, but, it is hoped, not contradiction.

By his cast of mind, Lavater was a decided realist, nothing was ideal to him outside the sphere of morals; it will facilitate the understanding of this rare and singular man if this fact is kept in mind.

His *Prospects of Eternity* look merely for a continuance of the present state of existence, under easier conditions than those which we have now to endure. His *Physiognomy*

is based on the conviction that the material world is entirely identical with the spiritual world, and not only proves its existence, but in fact represents it for us.

The ideals of art found little favour with him, because with his keen insight, he saw too clearly the impossibility of such conceptions ever taking actual shape, and he therefore banished them to the realm of fable, and even of monstrosity. His incessant demand for a realization of the ideal gained him the reputation of a visionary, although he felt convinced that no man insisted more strongly on the actual than he did; accordingly, he never could detect the error in his mode of thinking and acting.

Seldom has there been a man who strove more passionately than he for public recognition, and thus he was particularly fitted for a teacher; but though his efforts were directed to the intellectual and moral improvement of others, this was by no means his ultimate aim.

To realize the character of Christ was what he had most at heart; hence that almost insane passion to have picture after picture of Christ drawn, copied, reproduced; and, naturally, none of them ever satisfied him.

His writings are hard to understand, even now, for it is far from easy to arrive at his precise meaning. No one ever wrote so much of the times, and for the times, as Lavater; his writings are veritable journals, which in an especial manner require to be explained by the history of the day; they are, moreover, written in the language of a coterie, which one must know before one can do them justice, or much will appear stupid and absurd to the intelligent reader. Indeed, objections enough on this score have been made against the author, both in his lifetime and since.

Thus, for example, we had at one time so provoked him by our rage for dramatizing and representing everything that struck us under this one form, to the exclusion of all others, that, in the heat generated by the discussion, he made great efforts in his *Pontius Pilate* to show that there does not exist a more dramatic work than the Bible; and that the history of Christ's Passion in particular must be regarded as the drama of all dramas.

In this chapter of his little book, and indeed throughout

the work, Lavater appears greatly to resemble Father Abraham of Santa Clara; for his is the natural method for every richly gifted mind to adopt, in order to produce an immediate effect upon his contemporaries. He must acquaint himself with existing tendencies and passions, with the speech and terminology of the day, and adapt them to his ends, in order to draw near to the masses whom he seeks to attract.

Since Lavater took Christ literally,—as described by the Scriptures, and by various commentators,—he made use of this conception to supply his own deficiencies, and made it his ideal to incorporate the God-man with his individual human nature, until finally he felt himself entirely merged in him and united to him, and, indeed, believed that they had become one and the same.

This decidedly literal faith had also produced in him a perfect conviction that miracles can be wrought to-day as well as in the past. Accordingly, since in some important and trying emergencies of his earlier days, he had by fervid or rather violent prayer succeeded in procuring an instantaneous reversal of impending calamities, no cold objections made by reason could make him waver in the slightest. Impressed, moreover, with the great value of humanity as redeemed by Christ, and destined for a blissful immortality, but, at the same time, familiar with the various needs of man's heart and mind and with his insatiable yearnings after knowledge, and, moreover, conscious himself of that longing to escape from the limitations of finite existence, which the sight of the starry heavens, stretching into endless space, seems to awaken in us,—with feelings such as these he planned his *Prospects of Eternity*, which must have appeared a very strange book indeed to the greater part of his contemporaries.

All these aspirations, however, all his wishes, all his undertakings, were overborne by the genius for physiognomy, which nature had bestowed upon him. For, as the touchstone, by its blackness and peculiar roughness of surface, is eminently fitted to distinguish between the metals which are applied to it; so that pure conception of humanity, peculiar to Lavater, and that keen yet delicate gift of observation—

which at first he exercised from natural impulse, only superficially and incidentally, then deliberately, purposely, and regularly—rendered him unusually fitted to note the peculiarities of individual men, and to understand, distinguish, and express them.

Every talent which rests on a decided natural gift seems to have something of magic about it, because of our inability to reconcile it and its operations with any previous conception. And, in truth, Lavater's insight into the characters of individuals surpassed all conception; one was utterly amazed at his remarks, when we were talking in confidence of this or that person; nay, it was frightful to live with a man who clearly discerned the exact limits by which nature had been pleased to hedge in our various personalities.

Everyone is apt to believe that what he possesses himself may be communicated to others; and so Lavater was not content to make use of this great gift for himself alone, but insisted that it might be found and developed in others, nay, that it might even be imparted to the great mass of men. The many far-fetched and malicious misinterpretations, the many stupid jests, the vulgar scoffing, for which this striking doctrine furnished ample opportunity, may still be remembered by some; and it cannot be said that the worthy man was entirely without blame in the matter. For though the inner harmony of his being rested on a lofty morality, yet, with the variety of his aims, he was unable to attain to outward harmony, since he was entirely without the mind of the philosopher and the talent of the artist.

He was neither thinker nor poet; indeed, not even an orator, in the proper sense of the term. Utterly unable to approach a subject as a whole methodically, his handling of the particular instance taken by itself was sure, and the results would be noted down boldly side by side. His great work on Physiognomy is a striking proof and illustration of this method. In his own mind the idea of the moral and sensual man might form a whole; but he was unable to give outward expression to this idea, except practically by separate details, in the same way as he had apprehended them in life.

The work itself affords us a sad instance of how so keen-sighted a man may lose himself in matters of the commonest experience. For after appealing to every artist and dauber living, after spending incredible sums on drawings and engravings, which were not characteristic, he is after all obliged to say in his book that plate after plate is more or less a failure, unmeaning and worthless. True, by this means, he sharpened his own judgment, and the judgment of others; but it also proves that his mental bias led him to accumulate experiences, rather than derive fresh life and inspiration from them. For this reason he never could make straight for results, though I often pressed him for them. What in later life he confided as such to his friends, were none to me; for they consisted of a collection of certain lines and features, nay, warts and freckles, with which he had seen particular moral, and frequently immoral, peculiarities combined. There were certainly some most startling observations among them; but there was no sequence, on the contrary everything was in haphazard confusion, there was no gradual advance towards any general deductions and no reference to any principles previously established. And indeed there was just as little literary method or artistic feeling to be found in his other writings, which invariably contained passionate and earnest expositions of his thoughts and aims, and supplied, by the most charming and original details, what they failed to fulfil in general conception.

The following reflections, as they refer to the same circumstances, may be aptly introduced here.

No one willingly concedes superiority to another, so long as he can in any way deny it. Natural gifts of every kind cannot easily be denied, and yet in the common parlance of the day genius was ascribed to the poet alone. But now another world seemed all at once to emerge; genius was looked for in the physician, in the general, in the statesman, and before long, in all men who thought to make themselves eminent either in theory or practice. Zimmerman, especially, had advanced these claims. Lavater, by his views of Physiognomy, was compelled to assume a more

general distribution of mental gifts of all kinds; the word *genius* became a universal watchword, and because men heard it uttered so often, they thought that what it stood for was to be met with everywhere. Then, since everyone felt justified in demanding genius of others, he finally believed that he must possess it himself. The time was yet far distant when it could be affirmed, that genius is that power of man which by its deeds and actions gives laws and rules. At this time it was thought to manifest itself only by overstepping existing laws, breaking established rules, and declaring itself above all restraint. It was, therefore, an easy thing to be a genius, and nothing was more natural than that its abuse in word and deed should rouse all well-regulated minds to oppose such a disordered state of affairs.

When anybody rushed into the world on foot, without exactly knowing why or whither, it was called a tour of genius; and when anyone took in hand some aimless and useless absurdity, it was a stroke of genius. Young men, full of energy, often really gifted, came to grief in their scorn of all moderation; and then older and more sensible men, wanting, perhaps, in talent and in soul, took a malicious pleasure in making their many failures appear ridiculous in the eyes of the public.

And hence I found myself almost more hindered in my efforts after self-development and expression by the misguided co-operation and influence of kindred spirits, than by the opposition of those whose aims were directly contrary to my own. Words, epithets, and phrases in disparagement of the highest mental gifts were caught up by the unthinking masses and became stereotyped catchwords, so that to-day they are still occasionally heard on the lips of the uneducated; they even found their way into dictionaries. In this way the word genius had suffered so much from misrepresentation, that it seemed almost necessary to banish it entirely from the German language.

And so the Germans, with whom what is vulgar is more apt to prevail than with other nations, would perhaps have sacrificed the fairest flower of speech, the word which, though apparently foreign, really belongs to every people,

had not a sense of what is highest and best in man been revived and happily restored by a profounder philosophy.

In the preceding pages mention has been made of the youthful years of two men, whose memory will never fade from the history of German literature and civilization. At that period, however, we were introduced to them as it were only by the errors into which they were misled in company with their youthful contemporaries, by a false maxim, current at the time. Nothing, therefore, can be more proper than, with due appreciation and respect, to paint their external appearance, their true personalities, as was done at the time by Lavater, with his usual perspicacity, and as the outcome of direct intercourse. Hence, as the heavy and expensive volumes of the great work on Physiognomy are probably accessible to few of our readers, I have no scruple in inserting here the remarkable passages of that work which refer to both the Stolbergs, in the second part and its thirtieth fragment, page 224—

"The young men, whose portraits and profiles we have here before us, are the first men who ever sat and stood to me for physiognomical description, as others might sit to a painter for their portraits.

"I knew them before, noble youths—and I made the first attempt to observe and to describe their characters from life, and from any other knowledge I might possess.

"Here is the description of the whole man.—

FIRST, OF THE YOUNGER STOLBERG.

"Behold the blooming youth of 25! the lightly-poised, buoyant, elastic creature! it does not lie; it does not stand; it does not lean; it does not fly; it floats or swims. Too full of life, to rest; too supple to stand firm; too heavy and too yielding to fly.

"A floating thing, then, that does not touch the earth! In its whole contour not a single slack line; but on the other hand no straight one, no tense one, none firmly arched or sharply curved; no angular incisions, no rock-like projection of the brow; no hardness; no stiffness; no defiant roughness;

no threatening insolence; no iron will—buoyantly sensitive, perhaps, but not of iron; no steadfast and searching profundity; no slow deliberation, or prudent forethought; nowhere the reasoner with the scales held firmly in one hand, and the sword in the other; and yet not the least formality in look or judgment! but still the most perfect straightforwardness of intellect, or rather the most untarnished love of truth! Always the inward feeler, never the deep thinker; never the discoverer, the expounder, who tests the truth he sees so quickly, loves so quickly, grasps so quickly. . . . Perpetual soarer; seer; idealizer; beautifier;—who gives form and shape to all his ideas! Ever the half-intoxicated poet, seeing only what he desires to see;—not languishing in melancholy; not crushing inflexibly; but lofty, noble, powerful! who with his temperate 'thirst for the sun' hovers to and fro in the regions of air, striving to rise above himself, and again—does not sink to earth! but throws himself headlong to earth, bathes in the floods of the 'rocky stream,' and cradles himself 'in the thunder of the echoing rocks.' His glance—not the fiery glance of the eagle! His brow and nose—not the courage of the lion! His breast—not the steadfastness of the steed neighing for battle! In the whole, however, much of the well-poised suppleness of the elephant. . . .

"The projecting upper lip slightly drawn up towards the prominent nose, which is neither sharply cut, nor angular, evinces, with such a closing of the mouth, much taste and sensibility; while the lower part of the face bespeaks much sensuousness, indolence, and carelessness. The whole outline of the profile shows openness, honesty, humanity, but at the same time a liability to be led astray, and a high degree of good-hearted indiscretion, which injures no one but himself. The middle line of the mouth, when in repose, bespeaks a straightforward, aimless, weak, good-natured disposition; when in motion, tenderness, delicacy of feeling, extreme susceptibility, kindness, nobility. In the arch of the eyelids, and in the brilliance of the eyes, there sits not Homer, but the most profound, appreciative, and intuitive admirer and disciple of Homer; not the epic, but the lyric poet; genius, welling up, moulding, glorifying, creating, pervading, changing by its magic

everything into heroic form; deifying everything. The half-closed eyelids, such an arch, indicate the keenly sensitive poet, rather than the artist, slowly working after a pre-conceived plan; the lover, rather than the austere moralist. The full face of the youth is much more taking and attractive than the somewhat too loose, too protracted half-face; the front face in its slightest motion, tells of a highly sensitive, thoughtful, inventive, untaught, inward goodness, of a softly tremulous vivacity, abhorring wrong and thirsting for liberty. It cannot conceal the slightest of the many impressions which it receives momentarily and ceaselessly. Anything which touches him nearly drives the blood into the cheeks and nose; where honour is concerned, the most maidenly blush spreads like lightning over the delicately sensitive skin.

"The complexion has not the pallor of all-creating, all-consuming genius; nor the wild glow of the contemptuous destroyer; nor the milky-whiteness of the feeble-minded; not the sallow tint of the strong and hardy; not the olive-brown of the plodding labourer; but the white, the red, and the violet, mingling with one another, and blended together so expressively, and so happily, like the strength and weakness of the whole character. The soul of the whole and of each single feature is freedom, and elastic activity, which is apt to repel, and is as easily repulsed. The whole fore-face and the pose of the head proclaim magnanimity and genuine cheerfulness. Unspoiled feeling, delicacy of taste, purity of mind, goodness and nobility of soul, vital energy, a consciousness of strength and of weakness, shine out so transparently from the whole face, that what were otherwise bold self-complacency dissolves itself into noble modesty, and natural pride and youthful vanity are freely and artlessly merged into one radiant lovable apparition. The whitish hair, the length and awkwardness of form, the softness and lightness of step, the hesitating gait, the flatness of the breast, the fair unfurrowed brow, and various other traits give to the whole man a certain femininity, softening his inner vivacity, and making every intentional offence and every meanness for ever impossible to the heart; but at the same time it becomes obvious that the spirited and fiery poet, with all his unaffected thirst for freedom and for

emancipation is destined neither to be a reliable, methodical, persevering man of business, nor to achieve fame on the bloody field. And now, at the end, I notice that as yet I have said nothing of the most striking trait—the noble simplicity, free from all affectation! nothing of his childlike openness of heart! nothing of the entire unconsciousness of his outward nobility! nothing of the inexpressible *bonhomie* with which he accepts and bears admonition and blame, nay, even reproaches and wrongful charges.

"But who would ever stop, who tries to tell all that he has seen or felt in a good man, in whom there is so much pure humanity?"

DESCRIPTION OF THE ELDER STOLBERG.

"What I have said of the younger brother—how much of it applies also to the elder! The principal thing I have to remark is the following:—

"His figure and character are more compact and less diffuse than those described. There all was longer and flatter; here all is shorter, broader, more arched, and rounded; there all was looser; here everything is more clearly cut. So with the brow, the nose, the breast: more compressed, more energetic, less diffuse, more of concentrated life and power! For the rest, the same amiability and *bonhomie!* Not that striking openness, rather more astuteness, but in principle, or rather in deed, the same honesty. The same invincible abhorrence of injustice and baseness; the same irreconcilable hatred of all cunning and trickery; the same unyielding opposition to tyranny and despotism; the same pure, incorruptible love for all that is noble, and great, and good; the same need of friendship and of freedom, the same sensitiveness and noble thirst for glory; the same catholicity of heart for all good, wise, simple-minded, strong men, whether renowned or unrenowned, known or misunderstood,—and the same lighthearted heedlessness. No! not exactly the same. The face is more clearly cut, more compressed, firmer; has more inner possibilities for business capacity and practical counsels; more of the spirit of persistence—shown especially by the strongly prominent and

fully rounded bones of the eye-sockets. Not the over-flowing, rich, pure, lofty poet's feeling—not the ease and rapidity of the productive power which marks the other. But yet, though in profounder depths, full of life, upright, fervent. Not the airy genius of light, floating on the clouds of rosy dawn, and fashioning spirit shapes—more inner power, though perhaps less of expression! more powerful and terrible—less brilliant and polished; though his pencil wants neither colour nor magic. More wit and riotous humour; droll satire: brow, nose, glance—all so down-turned, so over-hanging—definite marks of original and all-enlivening wit, which does not garner from without, but brings forth from within. In short, in this character every trait is more prominent, more angular, more aggressive, more tempestuous! No passive dullness, no lassitude, except in the half-closed eyes, where, as well as in the brow and nose, voluptuousness are indicated. In all besides—and even in this very brow, this epitome of everything—even in this glance—there is an unmistakable expression of innate greatness; strength, human instincts; constancy, simplicity, decision!"

After allowing Merck to triumph over me in Darmstadt because he had foreseen my speedy separation from these gay companions, I found myself again in Frankfort, well received by everyone, including my father, although he could not conceal his disappointment that I had not gone down to Airolo and announced to him from Milan my arrival in Italy. It was not so much what he said as what his silence implied; in particular he did not show the slightest interest in those wild rocks, those lakes of mist, and dragons' haunts. At last, however, by an incidental remark, by no means intended as a contradiction, he showed what had been at the back of his mind all the time: he who has not seen Naples has lived in vain.

On my return I did not, I could not, avoid seeing Lili; our attitude towards one another was tender and considerate. I was informed that she had been fully convinced in my absence that she must break off her intimacy with me, and that this was the more necessary and indeed more practicable, since I had made my meaning sufficiently clear by

my journey and voluntary absence. Nevertheless, the same spots in town and country, the same friends, acquainted with all our past, could scarcely leave us untouched—we who were still lovers, although drawn apart in a mysterious way. It was an accursed state, in some ways resembling Hades, the meeting-place of the sadly happy dead.

There were moments when departed days seemed to revive, but instantly disappeared, like vanishing ghosts.

Some kind people had told me in confidence, that Lili, when all the obstacles to our union were laid before her, had declared that for love of me she was ready to renounce her present life with all its ties, and to go with me to America. America was then, perhaps, even more than now, the Eldorado of all who felt unhappy in their present position.

But the very thing which should have raised my hopes, only depressed them the more. My handsome paternal house, only a few hundred steps from hers, offered certainly more tolerable prospects than the uncertain and distant surroundings beyond the ocean; still I do not deny that in her presence all hopes, all wishes sprang to life again, and irresolution was stirring within me.

True, the injunctions of my sister were very peremptory and precise; not only had she, with all the reasonableness of which she was mistress, explained the situation to me, but she had also, in her sadly urgent letters, harped upon the same text with yet greater insistence. "Well," said she, "if you could not help it, then you would have to bear it; such things one must *suffer* but not *choose*." Some months passed away in this most miserable of all conditions; all onlookers were now opposed to the union; in her alone I felt, I knew, lay the power which could have overcome every difficulty.

Both the lovers, conscious of their position, avoided all solitary interviews; but, in company, they could not help meeting as usual. It was then that the strongest trial had to be endured, as every reader capable of noble emotion will acknowledge, when I have explained myself more fully.

It is generally allowed, that when forming a new acquaintance, or a new attachment, the lover gladly draws a veil over the past. Growing affection troubles itself about no antecedents, and as it springs up with the lightning flash

of genius, it knows nothing either of past or future. It is true, my closer intimacy with Lili had begun by her telling me the story of her early youth : how, from a child, she had excited in many people a liking and devotion to herself, especially in strangers visiting her father's hospitable house, and how it had caused her pleasure, though it had been attended with no further consequences and had led to no permanent tie.

True lovers consider all that they have felt before only as the preparation for their present bliss, only as the foundation on which the structure of their future life is to be reared. Past attachments seem like spectres of the night, which glide away before the break of day.

But what occurred? The Fair came on, and with it appeared the whole swarm of those spectres in their reality ; all the business friends of the important house came one after another, and it was soon manifest that not a man among them was willing or able wholly to give up some claim upon the attractive daughter. The younger ones, without being obtrusive, still seemed to claim the rights of familiar friends ; the middle-aged, with courteous dignity, appeared desirous of making themselves liked, and of advancing higher claims. There were fine men among them, with the ease due to the possession of a substantial fortune.

The older gentlemen, with their avuncular ways, were altogether intolerable ; they could not keep their hands in check, and in the midst of their offensive familiarity would demand a kiss, for which the cheek was not refused. It was so natural to her, gracefully to satisfy every demand. The conversation, too, excited many a painful remembrance. Allusion was constantly made to pleasure parties by water and by land, to perils of all kinds with their happy escapes, to balls and evening promenades, to the discomfiture of ridiculous wooers, and to whatever tended to excite an angry jealousy in the heart of an inconsolable lover, who had for a time reaped, as it were, the harvest of so many years. But amid all this crowd and gaiety, she did not neglect her friend, and when she turned to him she contrived, in a few words, to express all the tenderness which their present position seemed to ask for.

But let us turn from this torture, which even in memory

is almost intolerable, to the poetry, which afforded some alleviation to my mind and heart.

"*Lili's Menagerie*" probably belongs to this period; I do not quote the poem here, because it does not reveal the tenderness of our feelings, but seeks only, with poetical intensity, to exaggerate the lover's annoyance, and by ludicrous and irritating images, to change renunciation into despair.

The following song expresses rather the sweeter side of that misery, and on that account is here inserted:—

"Sweetest roses, ye are drooping,
By my love ye were not worn;
Bloom for one, who past all hoping,
Feels his soul by sorrow torn.

"Oh, the days still live in thought, love,
When to thee, my angel, bound;
I my garden early sought, love,
And for thee the young buds found.

"All the flowers and fruit I bore thee,
And I cast them at thy feet;
As I proudly stood before thee,
Then my heart with hope would beat!

"Sweetest roses, ye are drooping,
By my love ye were not worn;
Bloom for one, who past all hoping,
Feels his soul by sorrow torn."

The opera of *Erwin and Elmira* was suggested by the pretty little romaunt or ballad introduced by Goldsmith in his *Vicar of Wakefield*, which had given us so much pleasure in our happiest days, when we never dreamed that a similar fate awaited us.

I have already introduced some of the poetical productions of this epoch, and I only wish they had all been preserved. A never failing excitement in the happy season of love, heightened by the beginning of care, gave birth to songs, entirely free from exaggerated sentiment, and embodying only the genuine feeling of the moment. From festal lays, down to the most trifling dedicatory verses—all was living and real, and had wakened echoes in the breast

of a cultured circle; first glad, then sorrowful, till finally there was no height of bliss, no depth of woe, to which some strain had not been consecrated.

All these incidents of my inner and outer life, so far as they were likely to pain my father, were cleverly kept from him by my mother's prudent intervention. Although his hope of seeing me bring home that first possible daughter-in-law, who had so greatly pleased him, grew fainter and fainter, still this "grand lady," as he used to call her in confidence to his wife, never attracted him.

Nevertheless he let matters take their course, and diligently occupied himself with his little legal affairs. The young juristic friend, as well as the dexterous amanuensis, extended their sphere of activity in his name continually. As is well known, out of sight is out of mind; so they let me take my own way, and sought to establish themselves firmly on a soil on which I was not destined to thrive.

Fortunately my own tendencies corresponded with the sentiments and wishes of my father. He had so great an idea of my poetic talents, and felt so personal a pleasure in the success of my earliest efforts, that he often talked to me on the subject of new and further attempts. On the other hand, I carefully concealed from him these social effusions and poems of passion.

After making *Götz von Berlichingen* the representative of an important epoch of the world, as it appeared to me, I carefully looked out for another crisis in political history of similar interest. The revolt of the Netherlands attracted my attention. In Götz, I had depicted a true man sinking under the delusion that, in times of anarchy, a strong, well-meaning man counts for something. The design of Egmont was to show that the most firmly established institutions cannot maintain themselves against a powerful and shrewdly calculating despotism. I had talked so eagerly with my father about what the piece ought to be, and what I would make it, that it inspired him with an invincible desire to see the play, which I had already worked out in my head, set down on paper, printed, and admired.

In earlier times, while I still hoped to make Lili my own, I had applied myself with the utmost diligence to the study and practice of civil business, but now I sought to fill

the fearful gulf which separated me from her with occupations appealing more to my intellect and soul. I therefore set to work in earnest on the composition of *Egmont*. Unlike the first sketch of *Götz von Berlichingen*, however, it was not written in the right sequence and order; but after the first introduction I went straight on to the main scenes without troubling myself about the various connecting links. By this means I made rapid progress, because my father, knowing my fitful way of working, spurred me on (literally and without exaggeration) day and night, and seemed to believe that what was so easily conceived, might be completed with the same ease.

TWENTIETH BOOK

And so I went on working at my *Egmont;* and while I found in it some alleviation of my wounded passion, the society of a clever artist also helped me through many an evil hour. And thus, as had often before been the case, a vague attempt at practical improvement brought me a secret peace of mind, at a time when otherwise it was scarcely to be hoped for.

Georg Melchior Kraus, who had been born at Frankfort, but educated in Paris, had just returned from a short tour in Northern Germany; he paid me a visit, and I immediately felt an impulse and a need to attach myself to him. He was a light-hearted man of the world, whose easy delightful talent had found in Paris the training it needed.

At that time Paris was a pleasant residence for Germans; Philip Hackert was living there in credit and opulence; the true German style in which he faithfully executed landscapes after nature, both in body-colour and oils, met with great favour, as contrasted with the formal manner adopted by the French. Wille, in high esteem as a copper-plate engraver, was an instance of German excellence. Grimm, already an artist of some influence, afforded considerable help to his countrymen. Pleasant excursions on foot in order to take sketches from nature were constantly undertaken, with successful or promising results.

Boucher and Watteau, both of them artists born, whose works, though sharing the superficiality characteristic of the times, are still considered worthy of esteem, were favourably inclined to the new school, and even co-operated with them, but only by way of amusement and experiment. Greuze, living a retired life in his family circle, and fond

of representing domestic scenes, was delighted with his own works, and used his brush easily and creditably.

From all these men our townsman KRAUS was able to profit as an artist; he studied society at first hand, and showed a delicate grace in his portrait-like delineations of friendly family gatherings. He was equally happy in his landscape sketches, which pleased the eye by their clear outlines, massive shadows, and agreeable colouring. The inward sense was satisfied by a certain naïve truthfulness, while connoisseurs especially were pleased with the skill with which he at once composed a picture from whatever he copied from nature.

He was a most agreeable companion; a cheerful equanimity never failed him; obliging without obsequiousness, reserved without pride, he was everywhere at home, everywhere beloved, the most active, and, at the same time, the least difficult of mortals. With such talents and such a disposition, he soon won favour in aristocratic circles; he was especially well received at the castle of the Baron von Stein, at Nassau on the Lahn, whose accomplished and charming daughter he assisted in her artistic studies, and contributed in various ways to the social life of the castle.

Upon the marriage of this excellent lady to the Count von Werther, the newly wedded couple took the artist with them to their large estates in Thuringia, and thus, he too, found his way to Weimar. Here he became known and appreciated, and a wish was expressed by the brilliant circle gathered there, that he would fix his permanent abode in that city.

Helpful as he was to everybody, upon his return at this time to Frankfort he stimulated my love of art, which had been limited to merely collecting, to practical effort. The dilettante needs the presence of the artist, for he sees in the latter the complement of himself: the aspirations of the amateur are realized by the artist.

By a certain natural talent, aided by practice, I could manage an outline with fair success; and I could easily compose a picture from what I saw before me in nature; but I wanted the peculiar plastic power, the masterly workmanship, which gives body to the outline by well-graduated light and shade. My copies were rather remote suggestions

of the real form, and my figures resembled those light airy beings in Dante's Purgatory, which, casting no shadow themselves, are filled with alarm at the shadows of actual bodies.

Thanks to Lavater's physiognomical mania—for so we may well designate the importunate urgency with which he called upon all men, not only to observe physiognomies, but also to make practical attempts, whether artistic or bungling, at copying faces,—I had had some practice in drawing portraits of friends on grey paper, with black and white chalk. The likeness was not to be mistaken, but it required the hand of my artistic friend to make them stand out from the dark background.

When we turned over and looked through the rich portfolio of drawings which the good Kraus had brought back from his travels, the subject he liked best among sketches of landscapes and persons, was the circle at Weimar and its vicinity. On such paintings I, too, loved to linger, as it could not but be flattering to my youthful vanity, to find so many pictures only the text for the statement, constantly repeated in great detail, that they hoped to see me there. With much grace he would give life to the greetings and invitations he transmitted by showing the portraits he had taken of their senders. One very successful oil-painting represented the musical director Wolf, at the piano, with his wife behind him preparing to sing; and this gave the artist opportunity to assure me in earnest terms of the warm welcome this worthy pair would give me. Among his sketches were several of the wood and mountain scenery around Bürgel. Here an honest forester, more perhaps to please his pretty daughters than himself, had made pleasant and inviting paths through the rough masses of rocks, thickets, and plantations, by constructing bridges, railings, and easy paths. One of the drawings showed the fair damsels in white dresses, wandering along these woodland paths, with their attendant cavaliers. In one of these you might recognize Bertuch, whose serious designs upon the eldest daughter were openly avowed; and Kraus was not offended, if you ventured to see a likeness in a second youth to himself, and guessed his growing attachment to the sister.

Bertuch, as the pupil of Wieland, had so distinguished himself by his acquirements and energy, that he was already

appointed private secretary to the Duke, with the best possible prospects for the future. From him we passed to Wieland and talked invariably of his rectitude, cheerfulness, and kindly disposition; his valuable literary and poetical projects were dwelt upon in detail; the influence of the *Mercur* throughout Germany was discussed; many other names of literary, political, or social distinction were also mentioned, and among them, Musæus, Kirms, Berendis, and Ludecus. Among women, the wife of Wolf, and a widow Kotzebue, with a lovely daughter and a lively boy, and many more, were described in characteristic and appreciative terms. Everything seemed to point to a fresh and vigorous life in literature and art.

And so, by degrees, a complete picture was given of the sphere upon which the young Duke was to enter on his return; the situation had been largely prepared by his guardian, Princess Anna Amalia; while, as behoved a provisional government, the execution of matters of importance was left to the decision and initiative of the future sovereign. The sad ruin caused by the burning of the palace was already looked upon as furnishing an opportunity for new improvements. The mines at Ilmenau, which had stopped working, but which, it was asserted, might be set going again by repairing the deep shaft at a considerable expense; the university at Jena, which was somewhat behind the spirit of the age, and was at the moment threatened with the loss of some of its most able teachers,—these and other matters were awakening a noble interest in the public welfare. Already they were looking out for men, who, sharing the growing aspirations of Germany, might be qualified to further such various designs for good, and the prospect seemed as full of eager hope as the vigour and energy of youth could desire. And if it seemed sad to bring a young princess, not to a home of suitable princely dignity, but to a very ordinary dwelling built for quite a different object; still such beautifully situated and well-appointed country-houses as Ettersburg, Belvedere, and other delightful pleasure-seats, offered enjoyment for the present, and also a hope that a life in the midst of nature, at that time regarded as a necessity, might bear fruit in a happy activity.

In the course of this biography we have shown in detail how the child, the boy, the youth, sought by various ways to approach the supernatural; first, looking with strong inclination to a religion of nature; then, clinging with love to a positive one; and, finally, concentrating himself in the trial of his own powers and joyfully giving himself up to a general faith. Whilst he wandered to and fro, seeking and looking about him, in the intervals which lay between these several phases, he met with much that would not fit into any of them, and he seemed to realize more and more clearly the desirability of turning his thoughts away from the immense and incomprehensible.

He thought he could detect in nature—both animate and inanimate, with soul and without soul—something which manifested itself only in contradictions, and which, therefore, could not be comprehended under any idea, still less under one word. It was not godlike, for it seemed without reason; nor human, for it had no understanding; nor devilish, for it was beneficent; nor angelic, for it often betrayed a malicious pleasure. It resembled chance, for it evinced no succession; it was like Providence, for it hinted at connection. It seemed to penetrate all that limits us; it seemed to deal arbitrarily with the necessary elements of our existence; it contracted time and expanded space. In the impossible alone did it appear to find pleasure, while it rejected the possible with contempt.

To this principle, which seemed to come in between all other principles and separate them, and yet link them together, I gave the name of Daemonic, after the example of the ancients and others with similar experiences. I sought to escape from this terrible principle, by taking refuge, according to my wont, in a creation of the imagination.

Among the parts of history which I had particularly studied, were the events that made the countries which subsequently became the United Netherlands so famous. I had diligently examined the original sources, and had endeavoured, as far as possible, to get my facts at first hand, and to bring the whole period vividly before me. The situations it presented appeared to me to be in the highest degree dramatic, while Count Egmont, whose greatness as a man and a hero most captivated me, seemed to me a

suitable central figure round whom the others might be grouped with happiest effect.

But for my purpose it was necessary to convert him into a character marked by such peculiarities as would grace a youth better than a man in years, and an unmarried man better than the father of a family; a man leading an independent life, rather than one, who, however free in thought, is nevertheless restrained by the various relations of life.

Having then, in my conception of Egmont's character, made him youthful, and freed him from all fettering restraints, I gave him unlimited love of life, boundless self-reliance, a gift of attracting all men, enabling him to win the favour of the people, the unspoken attachment of a princess, the avowed passion of a child of nature, the sympathy of a shrewd politician, and even the loving admiration of the son of his greatest adversary.

The personal courage which distinguishes the hero is the foundation upon which his whole character rests, the ground whence it springs. He knows no danger, and is blind to the greatest peril when it confronts him. When surrounded by enemies, we may, at need, cut our way through them; the meshes of state policy are harder to break. The Daemonic element, which plays a part on both sides, in conflict with which what is loveable falls while what is hated triumphs; further the prospect that out of this conflict will spring a third element, and fulfil the wishes of all men;—this perhaps is what has gained for the piece (not, indeed, on its first appearance, but later and in due time), the favour which it still enjoys. Here, therefore, for the sake of many dear readers, I will forestall myself, and as I do not know when I shall have another opportunity, will express a conviction, which did not become clear to me till a later date.

Although this Daemonic element manifests itself in all corporeal and incorporeal things, and even expresses itself most distinctly in animals, yet it is primarily in its relation to man that we observe its mysterious workings, which represent a force, if not antagonistic to the moral order, yet running counter to it, so that the one may be regarded as the warp, and the other as the woof.

For the phenomena which result there are innumerable names; for all philosophies and religions have sought in prose and poetry to solve this enigma and to read once for all the riddle; and may they still continue to seek.

But the most fearful manifestation of the Daemonic is when it is seen predominating in some individual character. During my life I have observed several instances, either closely or at a distance. Such persons are not always the most eminent men, either in intellect or special gifts, and they are seldom distinguished by goodness of heart; a tremendous energy seems to emanate from them, and they exercise a wonderful power over all creatures, and even over the elements; and, indeed, who shall say how much further such influence may extend? All the moral powers combined are of no avail against them; in vain does the more enlightened portion of mankind attempt to throw suspicion upon them as dupes or as deceivers—the masses are attracted by them. Seldom if ever do they find their equals among their contemporaries; nothing can vanquish them but the universe itself, with which they have begun the fray; and it is from observation of facts such as these that the strange, but tremendous saying must have risen: *Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse.*

From these lofty reflections I return to the littleness of my own life, for which strange events, clothed at least with a daemonic appearance, were in store. From the summit of Mont Gothard, I had turned my back upon Italy, and returned home, because I could not live without Lili. An affection, which is grounded on the hope of a mutual happiness in one another, of a permanent union, does not die away all at once; on the contrary, it is nourished by the contemplation of legitimate desires and of honest hopes which we cherish.

It is in the nature of things, that in such cases the maiden should be consoled before the youth. To these beautiful children, the descendants of Pandora, is granted the enviable gift to charm, attract, and, instinctively and half-consciously rather than voluntarily, or still less, wantonly, to gather admirers around them; and thus, like the Magician's Apprentice, they are often in danger of being frightened by the swelling crowd of their adorers. And then at last a choice must be

made from among them all; someone must be exclusively preferred; someone must lead home the bride.

And how often does accident influence the choice and determine the decision of the chooser! I had renounced Lili from conviction, but love made me suspect my conviction. Lili had taken leave of me with the same feelings, and I had set out on a beautiful tour in order to distract my mind, but it produced the opposite effect.

As long as I was absent I believed in the separation, but did not believe in the renunciation. Recollections, hopes, and wishes, all had free play. Now I came back, and while the re-union of free and happy lovers is a heaven, the meeting again of youth and maiden who are kept apart by mere motives of prudence, is an intolerable purgatory, a forecourt of hell. When I again entered the circle in which Lili moved, all the dissonances which had from time to time marred our relation to one another, seemed to have gained double force; when I stood once more before her, the conviction that she was lost to me, fell heavy upon my heart.

Accordingly I resolved a second time on flight; therefore nothing could have been more opportune for me, than that the young ducal pair of Weimar should come from Carlsruhe to Frankfort, and that I should follow them to Weimar in compliance with constantly repeated invitations. Their Highnesses had always maintained towards me a gracious and confidential manner, which I for my part reciprocated with passionate gratitude. My attachment to the Duke from the first moment I saw him; my veneration for the Princess whom I had known so long, though only by sight; a desire to render some personal service to Wieland, who had shown himself so magnanimous towards me, and to atone on the very spot for my half-wilful, half-unintentional improprieties, were sufficient motives to make me anxious, or rather determined, to go, even had I been free from my unhappy passion. But I had the additional incentive of being forced to flee from Lili somewhere or other; whether to the south, where, according to my father's daily narratives, a most glorious paradise of art and nature awaited me, or to the north, whither so distinguished a circle of eminent men invited me.

The young princely pair now reached Frankfort on their way home. The Duke of Meiningen and his suite were there at the same time, and by them, as well as by the Privy Counsellor von Dürkheim, who accompanied the young princes, I was received in the most friendly manner possible. But now, as might be expected, a strange incident occurred quite in keeping with my youthful inexperience: by a little misunderstanding I was thrown into an incredible but rather laughable perplexity.

Their Highnesses of Weimar and Meiningen were living in the same hotel. I received one day an invitation to dinner. My mind was so preoccupied with the Court of Weimar, that it never occurred to me to inquire further, especially as I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that any notice would be taken of me by the Duke of Meiningen. Accordingly I went carefully arrayed to the "Roman Emperor," and found the apartments of the Weimar family empty; being informed that the Duke and his suite were with his Highness of Meiningen, I betook myself thither, and was kindly received. Supposing that this was only a morning visit, or that perhaps the two Dukes were to dine together, I awaited the issue. Suddenly, however, the Weimar suite began to move, and I of course followed; but instead of returning to their own apartments they went straight downstairs and into their carriages, and I was left alone in the street.

Now, instead of investigating the matter skilfully and prudently, and finding some solution, with my usual precipitancy I went straight home, where I found my parents at dessert. My father shook his head, while my mother tried to console me for my disappointment. In the evening she told me in confidence, that after I had gone away, my father had said, he was much surprised that I, who was not generally so stupid, could not see that in that quarter they only wished to make a fool of me and put me to shame. But this did not move me: for meanwhile I had met with Herr von Dürkheim, who in his mild way brought me to book with sundry graceful and humorous reproaches. I was now awakened from my dream, and had an opportunity to express my most sincere thanks for the favour intended me, contrary to my hopes and expectations, and to ask forgiveness for my blunder.

After I had determined on good grounds to accept their friendly offers, the following arrangement was made. A gentleman of the Duke's suite, who had stayed behind in Carlsruhe to wait for a landau which was being built in Strasburg, was to be in Frankfort by a certain day, and I was to hold myself in readiness to set off directly with him for Weimar. The hearty and gracious farewell with which the young sovereigns took their leave of me, the friendly behaviour of the courtiers, made me look forward most eagerly to this journey, to which the way seemed to have been made so pleasantly smooth.

But here, too, accidents came in to complicate so simple an arrangement; my passionate impatience made it worse and nearly upset it altogether. Having announced the day of my departure, I had taken leave of everybody, and after hastily packing up my chattels, not forgetting my unprinted manuscripts, I waited anxiously for the hour which was to bring the aforesaid friend in the new landau, and to carry me to a new country, and to new circumstances. The hour passed, and the day also; to avoid a second leave-taking and the intrusion of visitors, I had given out that I had gone away the morning fixed for my departure, and so I was obliged to keep in the house, and in fact in my own room, and consequently found myself in a strange predicament.

But since solitude and a confined space had always proved auspicious to me, because I was compelled to find employment under these circumstances, I set to work on my *Egmont*, and almost completed it. I read it over to my father, who had acquired a peculiar interest in this piece, and desired nothing more than to see it finished and in print, since he hoped that it would add to his son's reputation. He needed something of this sort to pacify and reassure him; for he was inclined to make very grave comments on the non-arrival of the carriage. He considered the whole affair a fiction, would not believe in any new landau, and pronounced the gentleman left behind to be a phantom of the air. It was, however, only indirectly that he gave me to understand all this; but he worried himself and my mother with all the greater insistence, maintaining that the whole thing was a piece of court pleasantry, which they had perpetrated in consequence of my former escapades, in order to

insult and disgrace me by leaving me ignominiously in the lurch, instead of conferring on me the honour I expected.

For myself, at first I adhered to my own belief, and congratulated myself upon these solitary hours, undisturbed by friends and strangers, or by any sort of social distraction. I therefore worked on vigorously at *Egmont*, though not without inward misgivings. And this frame of mind perhaps reacted favourably on the piece itself; for, stirred as it is by so many passions, it could not well have been written by one entirely passionless.

In this way a week and more went by, and I began to find this complete incarceration irksome. Accustomed for many years to live much in the open air, and to associate with friends on the most frank and familiar terms, to be constantly by the side of one dearly beloved, from whom indeed I had resolved to part, but who, as long as there was any possibility of meeting, drew me irresistibly to her—all this began to make me so uneasy, that my interest in my tragedy threatened to flag and my inventive powers to suffer from my impatience. Already for several evenings I had found it impossible to remain at home. Wrapped in a long cloak, I crept about the city, past the houses of my friends and acquaintances, not omitting to approach Lili's window. She lived on the ground floor of a corner house; the green blinds were down, but I could see plainly that the lights stood in their usual places. Soon I heard her singing at the piano; it was the song, *With resistless power why dost thou press me?* which I had written for her hardly a year before. She seemed to me to sing it with more expression than ever; I could make out every word distinctly; for I had placed my ear as close as the convex lattice would permit. After she had finished the song, I saw by the shadow which fell upon the curtain that she got up and walked backwards and forwards, but I sought in vain to catch the outline of her lovely person through the thick curtains. Nothing but the firm resolve to tear myself away, and not to trouble her by my presence, but actually to renounce her, and the thought of the strange stir my re-appearance would cause, could have determined me not to linger near one I loved so dearly.

Several more days passed away, and my father's

hypothesis became more and more probable, since not even a letter arrived from Carlsruhe to explain the non-appearance of the carriage. I was unable to go on with my poetry, and now, in the uneasiness with which I was inwardly distracted, my father had the game in his own hands. He represented to me, that it could not be helped; my trunk was packed, and he would give me money and credit to go to Italy; but I must decide to start at once. In such a difficult case, I naturally doubted and hesitated. Finally, however, I agreed that if, by a certain hour, neither carriage nor message had come, I would set off, directing my steps first of all to Heidelberg and thence across the Alps, not, however, going through Switzerland again, but rather taking the route through the Grisons, or the Tyrol.

Strange things must inevitably ensue, when a youth without plans and very apt of himself to go astray, is further incited by the passionate misconception of an old man to go on a wrong tack. But it is part of youth and life in general to understand the tactics after the campaign is over. In the ordinary course of things such an accident would be easy to explain; but we are always too ready to conspire with error against what is naturally probable, just as we shuffle the cards before we deal them round, in order that chance may not be deprived of its full share in the game. It is precisely thus that the element arises in and upon which the Daemonic loves to work; and it sports with us the more cruelly, the more certain we feel of its presence.

The last day of my waiting had gone, and the next morning I was to start; and now I felt an immense longing to see my friend Passavant again, who had just returned from Switzerland, and who would really have had cause to be offended if, by keeping my plans entirely to myself, I had violated the intimate confidence which subsisted between us. I therefore sent word to him by a stranger, requesting a meeting by night at a certain spot. I was the first to arrive enveloped in my cloak; but he was not long after me, and if he wondered at the appointment, he must have been still more surprised to meet the person he did. His joy, however, was equal to his astonishment; discussion of plans and counsel were not to be thought of, he could only wish me good luck on my Italian journey, and so we parted.

The next day at an early hour I found myself on the mountain road.

I had several reasons for going to Heidelberg; the first was a sensible one, for I had heard that our Weimar friend intended to pass through Heidelberg from Carlsruhe; and so, immediately on reaching the post-house, I left a note which was to be handed to a traveller who should pass through in the carriage described; the second reason was one of sentiment, and had reference to my recent relations with Lili. In short, Mademoiselle Delf, who had been the confidante of our love, and indeed the mediator with our respective parents for their approval of our definite engagement, lived there; and I deemed it the greatest happiness to be able, before I left Germany, to talk over those happy times with a valued, patient, and indulgent friend.

I was well received, and introduced to many families; my visits to the family of the high warden of the forests, von W———, particularly pleased me. The parents were dignified and easy in their manners, and one of the daughters resembled Frederica. It was just the time of vintage, the weather beautiful, and all my Alsatian feelings revived in the beautiful valley of the Neckar and Rhine. At this time I had been going through strange experiences, both as regards myself and others; but they were as yet vague and undigested in my mind, and had borne no fruit in my life; whatever sense of the infinite had been awakened within me served rather to confuse and perplex me. In society, nevertheless, I was my usual self, perhaps even more pleasant and sociable than before. Here, under this clear sky, among happy people, I revived the old pleasures which never lose their novelty and charm for youth. With an earlier and not yet extinguished love in my heart, I involuntarily excited sympathy, even though I never alluded to it, and thus I soon became at home in this circle, and indeed necessary to it, and I forgot that I had resolved, after a few evenings of friendly chat, to continue my journey.

Mademoiselle Delf was one of those persons who, without exactly intriguing, always like to have some business in hand, and while giving others something to do always have some end in view. She had conceived a sincere friendship for me; and it was the more easy for her to prevail on

me to prolong my visit as I lived in her house, so that she was able to suggest all manner of inducements for my stay, and raise all manner of obstacles to my journey. When, however, I wanted to turn the conversation to Lili, she was not so amenable and sympathetic as I had hoped. On the contrary, she approved of our mutual resolution to part under the circumstances, and maintained that one must submit to the inevitable, banish the impossible from one's mind, and try to find some new interest in life. With her love of scheming she had not intended to leave chance to decide what this should be, but had already formed a project for my future disposal, from which I clearly saw that her recent invitation to Heidelberg had not been so unpremeditated as it sounded.

She reminded me that the Electoral Prince, Karl Theodor, who had done so much for the arts and sciences, still resided at Mannheim, and that as the court was Roman Catholic while the country was Protestant, the latter party was extremely anxious to strengthen itself by enlisting the services of able and hopeful men. I must now go, in God's name, to Italy, and there mature my views on Art; meanwhile they would work for me. It would, on my return, soon be seen whether the budding affection of Fräulein von W——— had expanded or had been nipped, and whether it would be politic, through an alliance with a family of good standing to establish myself and my fortunes in a new home.

I did not, it is true, reject all these suggestions; but my natural distaste for making plans did not wholly accord with the scheming ways of my friend; I was gratified, however, with the kind intentions of the moment, while Lili's image floated before me, waking and dreaming, and mingled with everything else which afforded me pleasure or distraction. But now I called to mind the seriousness of my great travelling plan, and I resolved to make myself free, gently and courteously, and in a few days resume my route.

One night Mademoiselle Delf had gone on until late unfolding her plans, and all that certain people were disposed to do for me, and I could not but feel grateful for such sentiments, although the design of a particular group to

strengthen their position through me and my possible influence at court, might be dimly recognized. It was about one o'clock when we separated. I soon fell into a sound sleep, but before very long I was awakened by the horn of a postilion on horseback who stopped in front of the house. Very soon Mademoiselle Delf appeared with a light, and a letter in her hands, and coming up to my bed-side, she exclaimed, "Here it is; read and tell me what it says. It is sure to be from the Weimar people. If it is an invitation do not obey it, but remember our conversation." I asked her to give me a light and leave me for a quarter of an hour to myself. She went away reluctantly. I remained lost in thought for some time without opening the letter. The express came from Frankfort, I knew both the seal and handwriting; the friend, then, had arrived there; he was still true to his invitation, and our own want of faith and indecision had made us act prematurely. Why could one not wait quietly at home for a man whose coming had been definitely promised, but whose arrival might be delayed by so many accidents? The scales fell from my eyes. All the kindness, the graciousness, the confidence of the past came vividly before me, and I was almost ashamed of my strange evasion. I opened the letter, and found all that had happened explained quite naturally. My missing guide had waited for the new landau which was to come from Strasburg, day after day, hour after hour, as we had waited for him; then business had taken him round by Mannheim on his way to Frankfort, and to his dismay he had not found me there. He sent the hasty letter by express, assuming that now the mistake was explained I should instantly return, and save him the shame of going to Weimar without me.

Much as my understanding and my feeling inclined me to this side, there were still weighty arguments in favour of my new route. My father had drawn up for me a very attractive plan of travel, and had equipped me with a little library, to prepare me for the scenes I was to visit, and guide me amid them. In my leisure hours I had had no other entertainment than to reflect on it, and, indeed, during my last short journey I had thought of nothing else in the coach. Those glorious objects which, from my youth up, I had become acquainted with in picture and fable, rose up

before my mental vision, and nothing seemed to me so attractive as to travel nearer to them as I travelled further and further from Lili.

In the meantime I had dressed and was walking up and down my chamber. My anxious hostess entered. "What am I to hope?" she cried. "Dearest madam," I answered, "use no more arguments; I have made up my mind to return; I have carefully weighed the reasons, and to repeat them to you would be waste of time. The decision has to be made sooner or later, and who should make it but the person whom it most concerns?"

I was moved, and so was she; and an agitated scene ensued, which I cut short by ordering my servant to procure a post-chaise. In vain I begged my hostess to calm herself, and to turn the mock-departure which I had taken of the company the evening before into a real one; to consider that it was only a temporary visit, merely to pay my respects, that my Italian journey was not given up, and my return to Heidelberg was not precluded. She would hear none of it, and increased my agitation yet more. The coach was at the door; everything was packed, and the postilion sounded his wonted note of impatience; I tore myself away; she was still unwilling to let me go, and with great skill arrayed all the arguments arising from the present situation, so that finally, with passionate emotion, I called out in the words of Egmont—

"Child! child! no more! The coursers of time, lashed, as it were, by invisible spirits, hurry on the light car of our destiny, and all that we can do is with calm courage to hold the reins firmly, and to guide the wheels, now to the left, now to the right, avoiding a stone here, or a precipice there. Who can tell whither he is being borne? seeing he hardly remembers whence he has come."

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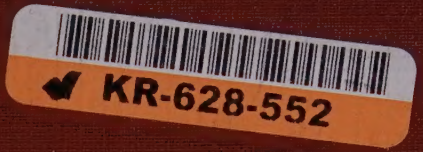
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